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## **HISTORIC MABLETON PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

### **Introduction and Executive Summary of Findings and Recommendations**

Mableton is one of Cobb County's oldest identifiable areas. Though now unincorporated, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the town of Mableton was an incorporated city (between 1912 and 1916). Similar to what has occurred in some of Georgia's established and mature communities, Mableton's infrastructure has deteriorated and long-standing businesses have relocated, leaving behind a community that today falls short of its potential.

Cobb County has embraced the "smart growth" concept of mixed-use, transit-oriented development (TOD) at a pedestrian-friendly scale. Because of its proximity to a proposed commuter rail line and the existing street network, Mableton is a prime location to implement the principles of smart growth. With careful planning and guidance, Mableton can be transformed into a desirable, transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use community. Recognizing this opportunity in Mableton, the State of Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has provided Cobb County with a special grant to begin the revitalization of Historic Mableton.

Preparation of the *Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan* is the first step towards community revitalization. This master plan will guide future land use and transportation decisions, expanding on recommendations set forth in Cobb County's Comprehensive Plan (1995-2015). Focusing on the core area of Historic Mableton, the plan identifies, analyzes, and addresses various issues of immediate concern to the community. The result of this inquiry is a set of new policies, projects and recommendations that will help to revitalize Mableton.

While funding for the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan has been made available by DCA, there are numerous individuals and organizations that have contributed significant time and effort during the planning process. Deserving of special recognition are the Cobb County Commissioners and staff, including the Departments of Economic Development, Community Development and Transportation; the First Baptist Church of Mableton; State of Georgia legislators who participated on several occasions; and all of the Mableton community residents and stakeholders who participated throughout the process.

### **Summary of Community Goals**

The title "Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan" was established during the first public meeting of the planning process. This title expresses the essential vision of the Mableton community: to preserve the valuable assets of Mableton and improve the community for current and future generations. The following goal statements pertaining to *Preservation* and *Improvement* were crafted during the planning process:

#### ***Preservation Goals***

- Maintain the stability of single-family residential areas.
- Maintain the community's friendliness and the small town character of Mableton.
- Preserve historic homes, buildings, institutions, and properties.
- Protect trees and environmental features.

#### ***Improvement Goals***

- Enhance community identity through organization and recognition.
- Achieve community beautification through enforcement of existing codes, establishment of appropriate new guidelines, and public improvements.

- Increase community population and economic growth through appropriate development of vacant properties and redevelopment of underused properties.
- Enhance community connectivity through improvement of the local network for cars, bicycles, and pedestrians and linkages to the regional transportation system.
- Increase local involvement in the community development process.

## **Historic Mableton Land Use and Redevelopment Recommendations**

Future land use, development and redevelopment recommendations for the Historic Mableton area are based on ideas that emerged from the public participation process. For descriptive purposes, the Historic Mableton Area has been subdivided into the six following districts: Historic Core Area, Mableton Elementary Area, Old Floyd Road Corridor, Walker Drive Redevelopment Area, Carol Circle Redevelopment Area, and Veterans Memorial/Floyd Road Commercial Corridors (Figure 1: Illustrative Master Plan).

### ***1. Historic Core Area***

A key organizing feature of the plan is the original (1882) plat of a nine-block area of Mableton for public auction. The visage of these nine blocks is still evident in the community, forming the historic core of Mableton. Recommendations to extend Daniel Street to meet Front Street at the southwest corner of this core area and to develop a pedestrian-oriented path along the Avery Street right-of-way will complete the definition of the nine-block area.

At the southern end of the Historic Core Area, Front Street and the two blocks north of Front Street will become a community focal point with park space, transit connections and commercial activity. South of Front Street, a civic plaza and park area complements the future commuter rail station by providing public gathering space and opportunities for traditional vendors and retail services.

The First Baptist Church of Mableton occupies the northeast block of the nine-block core area. To the south, the block between Center and Mable Streets includes a mixture of residential and commercial uses. West of Church Street, the recommended land use is single family-residential. Infill development on vacant or subdivided parcels and rehabilitation of older homes should be encouraged in this area.

### ***2. Mableton Elementary Area***

Residential land use is planned to surround Mableton Elementary School, a community focal point. To facilitate infill development in the school area, Peak Street should be extended to Prospect Street, formalizing the school and Prater Park as a block. The intersection of Church Street and School Way will be improved due to the extension of Wilson Drive to Church Street. The proximity of Mableton Elementary, the First Baptist Church, the cemetery and Prater Park establishes an institutional use zone in Historic Mableton.

### ***3. Old Floyd Road Corridor***

From Mable Street to Clay Road, the Old Floyd Road corridor should be redeveloped as a mixed-use commercial/office/residential corridor. New and renovated buildings should conform to a traditional architectural style and should be situated near the street with parking relegated to areas behind buildings. This corridor will be anchored on the southern end by the commercial block between Mable Street and Front Street and on the northern end by a gateway park and community center/library facility.

#### ***4. Walker Drive Redevelopment Area***

Walker Drive should be extended to Church Street, opening up a significant amount of land for development. The recommended land use in this area is mixed-use with an emphasis on higher-density residential. Public open space should be included as a central focal point of higher-density residential development. The Mitchell Street pedestrian corridor will connect this area to the Front Street commercial area, and Walker Drive will connect to the Church Street institutional area.

#### ***5. Carol Circle Redevelopment Area***

Intersection improvements should enhance the development potential of Carol Circle. The land use focus of Carol Circle should be higher-density residential, including multi-story townhouse units. This residential area will have easy access to the Old Floyd Road mixed use corridor, Floyd Road and Veterans Memorial Highway.

#### ***6. Veterans Memorial and Floyd Road Commercial Corridors***

Parcels fronting the portions of Veterans Memorial Highway and Floyd Road that are in the Historic Mableton Study Area should remain highway commercial. Significant improvements should be made to this area such as coordination of signage, landscape and sidewalk enhancements, building façade updates, and redevelopment of obsolete or blighted properties.

### **Historic Mableton Public Improvements Recommendations**

Improvements to public infrastructure and community facilities are needed throughout the Historic Mableton area. In some circumstances, these can be privately funded in conjunction with new development or redevelopment. However, many improvements will need to be completed with public funds. The recommended public improvement projects are divided into three general categories: *Road Network Improvements*, *Bike/Pedestrian/Streetscape Improvements*, and *Public Land/Parks/Buildings*.

#### ***1. Road Network Improvements***

Extending northwards from the Front Street area, the two primary north-south corridors of Church Street and Old Floyd Road lead into an improved community street network that should be pedestrian-friendly and aesthetically reminiscent of traditional small southern towns. This network must support redevelopment at a density greater than currently exists if Mableton is to become a true transit-oriented community. Recommended projects to enhance the road network include the following:

- Peak Street Railroad Overpass (to replace the at-grade Church Street railroad crossing)
- Walker Drive – School Way Connection (to establish an east to west route in the street network)
- Center Street – Carol Circle Connection (to establish another east to west route in the street network)
- Peak Street – Prospect Street Connection (to encircle the school with public streets and improve the street network)
- Daniel Street Extension (to reintroduce the boundary of the original nine block area and improve the street network)
- Walker Drive – Carol Circle Realignment (to improve an uneven intersection area on Old Floyd Road)
- Old Floyd Road Bridge Improvements (to upgrade the Old Floyd Road railroad bridge for traffic and pedestrian movements)
- Walker Circle Paving (to pave a gravel/dirt surfaced cul-de-sac in the community)
- Front Street Paving (to pave a dirt road in the community)

## **2. *Bike/Pedestrian/Streetscape Improvements***

Along with improvements to the road network for vehicular circulation, improvements for pedestrians and cyclists are also needed. Any new road improvement project should involve streetscaping, a catch-all category that includes sidewalks, bicycle lanes, street trees, pedestrian lighting, benches, trash receptacles, etc. Recommended specific streetscape upgrade projects include the following:

- Church Street Corridor Streetscape
- Front Street Streetscape
- Old Floyd Road Corridor Streetscape
- Floyd Road Streetscape
- Mitchell Street Bike/Pedestrian Corridor
- Avery Street Bike/Pedestrian Corridor
- General Sidewalk and Drainage Improvements (throughout the community)

## **3. *Public Lands/Parks/Buildings***

Public funding will be required for recommended new public facilities as well as for improvements to existing public facilities. These projects will involve land acquisition, landscape development, new buildings, and ongoing maintenance and upgrades. For Historic Mableton to function as a mixed-use, transit-oriented community of moderate density, parks and public facilities will be vital. The following is a list of major projects:

- Commuter Rail Plaza and Transit Station (between Front Street and Veterans Memorial Hwy)
- Railroad Greenway Trail/Linear Park (between Fontaine Road and the railroad – extend connection to Silver Comet Trail)
- Clay Road and Old Floyd Road Community Property (a park, community center or library on Clay Road west of Old Floyd Road)
- Mableton Elementary School/Prater Park upgrades and improvements (enhancement of the block containing Mableton Elementary and Prater Park)

## **Historic Mableton Organization and Implementation Recommendations**

Recommendations for land use, development, redevelopment and public improvements represent a significant scope of work for implementation. It is vital that the right kinds of organizations be in place to facilitate a long-term implementation process. Throughout the planning process, the Mableton Community has shown overwhelming interest and support for community preservation and improvement. Above all, this community involvement and leadership must be extended through the implementation process. Some general recommendations for implementing the goals set forth in this plan include the following:

- Establish a position for a Historic Mableton liaison to the Cobb County Government.
- Revise Cobb County plans and regulations to be consistent with the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan.
- Encourage the creation of a Historic Mableton Community Development Corporation (CDC).
- Pursue access to redevelopment powers made available to local governments through the Georgia Redevelopment Powers Act.

With continued support from Cobb County and increased involvement of Mableton residents and businesspeople, these recommended policies, projects and organizations can become realities. It is clear from the level of local interest and involvement in the planning process that the Mableton community is ready to partner with county, regional and state agencies in order begin the revitalization of Historic Mableton.

## 1. PLANNING CONTEXT

The general context for the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan is the Mableton area of southern Cobb County, Georgia. The following sections include descriptive information related to this planning context and its history, location, and existing conditions.

### 1.1 Historic Mableton

The Mableton community has a documented history that begins in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. An understanding of this history is critical to the ability to properly plan for the future. Following is a brief summary of the historical documentation that has been reviewed during the planning process, and a specific description of the Historic Mableton study area.

#### 1.1.1 History

##### *Early History: 1830's to 1880*

Following a series of changes in jurisdiction over the land including the present-day Mableton area, Cobb County was established in 1832 by the Governor of Georgia. The land of Cobb County was surveyed in that same year, and the districts and land lots were recorded in a plat dated August, 1832. From that time, the southwest corner of the 17<sup>th</sup> District and the southeast corner of the 19<sup>th</sup> district meet at a point considered to be the center of Mableton. A list of the first recorded landowners in Mableton following the 1832 Gold Land Lottery is recorded in *History of Mableton, Georgia 30059: a Town in Cobb County, U.S.A.* by L. Harold Glore, 1968.

Landowners carried on primarily agricultural activities in Cobb County and the Mableton area through the 1800's. The majority of the land in Coxes District, a voting and census district which included the Mableton area, was owned by less than two dozen individuals.

Civil War activity associated with Sherman's Atlanta Campaign occurred in and near the Mableton area in July of 1864. Federal troops under McPherson's Army of the Tennessee occupied the Mableton area on July 3. The Mable plantation was used by Federal troops as a camp, and the Mable House was used as a hospital for injured soldiers (Harold Glore, *History of Mableton*, 1968).

##### *Community Establishment: 1880's to 1920's*

The stretch of the Georgia Pacific Railroad extending from Atlanta to Alabama passing through south central Cobb County was completed in 1881. In 1882, a small post office was established in an area called Mableton, named so in honor of Robert Mable, who allowed the rails to cut through his property. (Interview with Edith Mable Cole, *Cobb County Oral History Series*, 1984) Not long after the post office opened, 25 business lots facing the railroad were platted and sold at auction.

The building on the corner of Front and Church streets was opened as a general store in 1882. It was the first retail business in Mableton. The Barnes store next to the railroad was built in the early 1880s as the T. J. Lowe Guano Manufacturing Plant. A second general store, on the site of present-day Barber's Oil Company, was opened a few years later, sometime at the end of the 1890's. Other stores from the era included a medical building on Floyd Road, near the overhead bridge, a general store on Floyd road, a taxi service in an alley behind Front Street, and a school (c. 1885). (Interview with L. Harold Glore, *Cobb County Oral History Series*, 1984)

The Town of Mableton was first incorporated in 1912, and existed until the summer of 1916, when a rainstorm overwhelmed the sewer system, causing a localized flood. Without resources sufficient to upgrade its infrastructure, the Town struck a deal with Cobb County agreed to pay the cost of replacing the sewer pipes if it would relinquish its charter. The residents voted and agreed and Mableton's charter was revoked by the Georgia legislature in 1916. It has remained unincorporated since. (Interview with L. Harold Glore, *Cobb County Oral History Series*, 1984)

Local schools played an important role in the history of Mableton. Following several privately established schools, the first public school building in Mableton was located near the present day site of the First Baptist Church in 1883. It is recorded that in 1917 there was an organized Mableton School District that included 5,720 acres of land. A school tax was collected from the district based on property value, and a school Principal was hired as early as 1914. In 1928, a new Mableton High School building was constructed and used until its destruction by fire in 1948 (Harold Glore, *History of Mableton*, 1968).

#### *1930's to 1960's*

Mableton had passenger rail service for several years prior to the 1929 stock market crash. Up to 18 trains stopped every day. At the time, there were no paved roads in south Cobb County. The train was the fastest means of travel. But in 1930, Bankhead Highway (now Veterans Memorial) was finally paved, opening the way for the rapid infusion of private automobiles, and the ultimate demise of rail service. (Interview with L. Harold Glore, *Cobb County Oral History Series*, 1984)

The first residential subdivision in Mableton was Whispering Pines, began in 1930. In the years after World War II the demand for housing in the area intensified as GI's returned home to generous federally sponsored home lending programs. The expanding regional economy helped sustain the need for new housing developments around Old Mableton through the mid-1960s. (Interview with L. Harold Glore, *Cobb County Oral History Series*, 1984)

#### *1960's to Present*

In 1960, there were approximately 5,000 residents within one mile of the Mableton Post Office who received mail delivery service (Harold Glore, *History of Mableton*, 1968). The 1960 Census population county for Mableton was 7,127, and included residents within approximately two miles of the Post Office. These statistics give an indication of the size of the Mableton community at that time. Growth and development of subdivisions in the Mableton area continued at a rapid rate in the 1960's and 1970's. Through the 1980's and 90's Mableton matured, with the Veterans Memorial Parkway and Floyd Road developing in major commercial corridors.

Today, Mableton is a community in the middle of significant changes. The area's population has shifted in racial composition and other characteristics, as described in following sections. The area is experiencing new residential and commercial development while also coping with some deteriorating structures and property neglect. This planning initiative and other major developments such as the Mable House Amphitheatre, now under construction, suggest that the future for Mableton is promising.

#### **1.1.2 Location**

The Mableton community is located in southern Cobb County in the western portion of the Atlanta metropolitan region. Mableton is within unincorporated Cobb County and is southwest of the City of Smyrna and east of the City of Austell. The center of the community, referred to herein as Historic Mableton, is located approximately 9 miles from the county seat of Marietta, 5 miles outside of the I-285 perimeter highway, and 12 miles from downtown Atlanta.



The often-repeated chief consideration of real estate professionals is “location, location, location.” The Mableton community benefits from a location that is increasingly desirable in the metro Atlanta area. It appears that the trend of investment and development moving farther from the metro area’s center has begun to shift to a renewed focus on “in-town” communities and neighborhoods. Though not inside the I-285 perimeter, Mableton is in a location that is considered to be convenient to several major employment centers (downtown Atlanta, Cumberland-Galleria, Fulton Industrial Boulevard). The area’s attractive, mature neighborhoods with relatively affordable housing should continue to be attractive to long time residents and newcomers alike for the foreseeable future.

## **1.2 Planning Study Area**

The study area for the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan is referred to as Historic Mableton or Old Mableton. This area is generally considered to be the center or core of the broader Mableton community.

### **1.2.1 Study Area Boundaries**

The study area’s southern boundary is U.S. 78/Veteran’s Memorial Highway. The western boundary is comprised of Daniel Street for approximately half of its length, and the rest of the western boundary consists of property lines that follow the historic street grid lines extended from Daniel Street to meet with US 78/ Veteran’s Memorial Highway. The northern boundary is Clay Road that runs from east to west between Daniel Street and Floyd Road; and the eastern boundary is Floyd Road, extending north to south between Clay Road and US 78/Veteran’s Memorial Highway.

### **1.2.2 Current Plans Impacting the Study Area**

#### *Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance*

The Cobb County Comprehensive Plan and Cobb County Zoning and Development Regulations are the primary plans and policies that impact land use and development in Mableton, as well as the remainder of Cobb County. The Comprehensive Plan is updated on an annual basis, and the recommendations of this plan are anticipated to be considered during the update process.

Recently, county planners have been developing new guidelines to address current issues in planning and land development, such as Traditional Neighborhood Development and architectural design guidelines. A Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is a human scale, walkable community with moderate to high residential densities and a mixed-use core (*Cobb Development Standards*, 2001). In the revised version of the Cobb County Development Standards, Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) guidelines are detailed. The guidelines establish official terms and standards for TND in Cobb County and suggest criteria that should be met in projects intended to be classified as TND. These guidelines may prove relevant to future development in the Historic Mableton area.

Cobb County has established architectural design guidelines for commercial development, redevelopment, and building renovations. These guidelines “articulate clear community design principles that assist architects and engineers in understanding the County’s minimum design criteria.” (*Cobb Development Standards*, 2001) These guidelines are not intended to usurp control of the creative process from designers and developers, but only to suggest a few basic features that will help avoid architectural redundancy in the built environment. As a potential site for new industrial and commercial development, Historic Mableton could benefit from firm enforcement of these guidelines.

The Cobb County Zoning Ordinance has specific relevance to development and redevelopment in Mableton. Zoning categories and their standards regulate the use of property, the density of development, and the location of buildings and infrastructure. Current zoning categories in the Historic Mableton area include the following:

Residential R-20

Minimum lot size: 20,000 sq ft  
Minimum floor area: 1200 sq ft  
Minimum lot width: 75 ft  
Minimum front set back: 40/40/35  
Maximum percent lot coverage: 35  
Maximum height: 35

Residential Duplex

Minimum lot size: 20,000 sq ft  
Minimum floor area: 700 sq ft/unit  
Maximum units per acre: 4  
Minimum lot width: 75 ft  
Minimum front set back: 50/50/35  
Maximum percent lot coverage: 35  
Maximum height: 35

General Commercial

Minimum lot size: 20,000 sq ft  
Minimum floor area: na  
Minimum lot width: 60 ft  
Minimum front set back: 50/40/40  
Maximum percent lot coverage: na  
Maximum height: 4 stories

Neighborhood Shopping

Minimum lot size: 20,000 sq ft  
Minimum floor area: na  
Minimum lot width: 60 ft  
Minimum front set back: 50/40/40  
Maximum percent lot coverage: na  
Maximum height: 35

*Transportation*

The following documents were reviewed to research existing/proposed transportation projects in the study area and to assist in identifying existing deficiencies:

- The Cobb County Comprehensive Plan: A Policy Guide (1995-2015, amended, December 12, 2000) and its accompanying Appendix.
- The Georgia Department of Transportation 6-year Construction Work Program for Cobb County.
- The FY 2001- FY 2003 Atlanta Transportation Improvements Program compiled by the Atlanta Regional Commission.
- Interview with Mr. Mike Tuller, Division Manager of the Transportation Planning Department of the Cobb County Department of Transportation.

- Cobb County Transportation Improvements Program.

Currently, no planned major transportation improvements within the study area were identified from these sources.

### **1.3 Socioeconomic Conditions**

Demographic and economic statistics are valuable tools for understanding the composition and dynamics of a community. The following sections include detailed descriptions and analysis of demographic and economic statistics for the Mableton area.

#### **1.3.1 Demographics**

The extent of the Mableton study area lies within a single census tract (313.06). Since place boundaries are porous, a considerably wider range of individuals identifies with and uses the study area than could be included in this single tract. In order to provide a better perspective of this population, six census tracts that surround the study area were selected for description and analysis. Each of these tracts borders and lies within 2 miles of the study area tract.

Resembling a triangle, tract 313.06 is bounded on the south by Veterans Memorial Highway. The northeastern boundary is Floyd Road; the angle formed by Glore and Clay Roads traces most of the northwestern edge. Because of population growth, tract 313.06, along with 313.07, was new for the 2000 Census. These tracts were created when tract 313.01, which previously contained the study area, was split. Thus, in order to compare data over time, tracts 313.06 and 313.07 must be recombined into the old tract 313.01.

In 2000, tract 313.01 had nearly 10,000 residents, one quarter of who reported themselves as non-white. Ten percent of the population was over 65 years and lived in nonfamily households; 38 percent of households contained individuals under 18 years. The housing vacancy rate was just under two percent, and the size of the average household was approximately 2.7 persons. Married couple families made up 60 percent of total households.

Like the study area, population growth forced tract 313.04 to split (creating tracts 313.08 and 313.09). Longitudinal comparison of data in the larger area requires a recreation of the boundaries of 313.04. The composition of the population in the larger data area (four tracts) was more diverse than that of the study tract. Non-whites comprised 36 percent of the total population. Ten percent of the population was over 65 years. Twenty five percent of households were nonfamily; 39 percent had individuals under 18 years. Housing vacancy rates stood at three and a half percent. Average household size was 2.7 and married couple families made up 55 percent of total households.

Since 1990, the population in both the study tract and the larger data area has changed considerably. The total population of tract 313.01 grew little, but churned considerably. The nonwhite population grew by 272 percent while the whites declined by nearly 20 percent. Vacant housing units dropped by 50 percent while the total number of housing units increased by only two percent; total households grew by five percent. The number of households with individuals under 18 years declined by eight percent, while the number of individuals 65 years and over increased by almost 30 percent. Married couple family households declined by 12 percent. Renter-occupied units increased at a rate twice that of owner-occupied units.

The larger data area showed more pronounced changes. Nonwhites grew by 350 percent as whites decreased by 18 percent. Total population grew by 20 percent, households by 21 percent, and housing units by 18 percent. Renter- and owner-occupied units increased at identical rates. The number of nonfamily households rose by 49 percent, while the number of married couple family households rose by less than one percent. Vacant housing units declined by nearly one quarter; individuals 65 years and over increased by one quarter. The number of households with individuals under 18 years increased by 19 percent.

The change portrayed in the Census data is significant. Putting various indicators together develops a more robust image of the area. Perhaps the most salient trend is the concomitant decline in the white population and rise in the nonwhite population. The fact that nonwhites went from just under 10 percent of the total population to over 35 percent, and that the total population grew by 20 percent, suggests a rather dynamic movement of individuals into and out of the data area. That this movement occurred in the span of a single decade makes it more significant.

There are other factors to be considered in this image. The rise in the proportion of individuals 65 years and over and increase in the percentage of nonfamily households reveals a growing number of single-individual households, or two person households of unrelated individuals. Typically, the types of housing units families occupy are connected to age, income, race, and life stage. It appears that as many younger whites moved out, similarly aged nonwhites moved in. This suggests that as households with children departed others moved into their place. This helps explain the static nature of average household size, pace-keeping growth of households with individuals under 18 years (i.e. children), and decline in the number and proportion of vacant units.

While race was shifting, overall residential density in the data area increased significantly. Total population rose and the growth of households outpaced the growth of housing units while the percentage of vacant units, a small percentage of the total number of units, shrunk substantially. This suggests that previously vacant units were reoccupied and new units were occupied upon completion.

Family households increased by 13 percent during the decade, a rate slower than total population, total households, and nonfamily households. Thus families lost overall share of individuals and housing units. This trend raises the possibility of an increasing number of children (under 18 years) living in households with people they are not related to, i.e. not their own families. It also suggests that family households are in fact declining in the data area, and that a bigger shift in household structure is at work. The static growth of married couple family households from the beginning of the decade to the end, when compared to the growth of family households and those with children under 18 years, seems to indicate an increase in households headed by single-parents.

Within a broader context, the changes indicated by the Census data suggest both the study area and data area are in the midst of a major population shift. The patterns are indicative of the so-called push hypothesis of white flight, an explanation for the phenomenon observed since around the time of the 1954 *Brown v. Board* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. The hypothesis argues that as nonwhites enter a homogenous white area, perceptions of the character of that area decline and existing whites begin to leave, pushed by fear of the newcomers. This happens even though the first wave of newcomers often mirrors the social character and aspirations of the fleeing whites. (Orser, 1990)

The primary exodus is among the middle-class young and middle-aged individuals between 18 and 40, often with children. The reasons for departure are complex. Those most often cited include the presence of school-age children, housing values, crime, congestion, and retail quality. By contrast, older whites, particularly those at or near retirement age (65 years and over), tend to stay behind or at least lag in the celerity of their departure. Like their younger cohorts, their reasons for the timing and

destination of departure are complex. This may be a result of deeper investment in a particular place, housing affordability, less concern with retail diversity, age-induced fragility, or absence of school-age children.

Once begun, the process can continue relentlessly, transforming an area completely in a matter of a few years. Some researchers have argued that this pattern of out-bound migration has become a national phenomenon, dividing metropolitan regions into two distinct zones. The inner zone, comprised of the urban core and older suburbs (like Mableton), is increasingly home to the vast majority of nonwhites, while the outer zone, mostly new suburbs and exurbs, houses fleeing whites.

It is yet early to tell where Mableton's fate will fall. As older whites depart, whether by conscious relocation or natural attrition, currently occupied housing units will open up. The question remains as to who will occupy these units. Migration patterns in the metropolitan region largely mirror nation trends, which seems to suggest that the flight of whites from older, inner suburbs like Mableton will continue, and that nonwhite in-migrants, in many cases immigrants, will fill the gaps left behind.

### *1.3.2 Economic Conditions*

Unlike population and housing, accurate data for small-area economies is difficult to obtain. The Economic Census, published every five years, is the single richest source for quantitative information about the economy, but does not categorize data down to the census tract level. The most recent Economic Census was conducted in 1997. County Business Patterns, less detailed estimates of economic activity produced in the interim years by the Census Bureau, offer general information useful for developing a basic description of counties, places, and zip code areas. This data was used as the primary source for information about Mableton's economy. Since it was organized by ZIP code, the data covers an area of different dimensions than the census tracts used to measure population and housing.

In 1999, the most recent year available, there were 522 firms operating in the 30126 ZIP code, the area that includes Old Mableton. Together, these firms employed 5824 individuals. The annual payroll for their employees for 1998 was \$174,415,000. This is an average of \$29947 per capita. The distribution of firms was skewed toward the smallest. Fifty-nine percent had between one and four employees. There were no firms with more than 1000 employees, and only one with more than 500.

Among industrial categories, Construction and Miscellaneous Services had the largest number of firms and employees. There were in both sectors clusters of firms in the one-to-four and five-to-nine employee categories. Construction had a smaller cluster in the 50-99 category and included the one very large (500+ employees) firm in the area.

Retail trade was the third largest industrial category, with 75 total firms. Like Construction and Miscellaneous Services, the majority of these firms had fewer than 10 employees. There were 35 Manufacturing establishments, but only one of significant size (100-249 employees). The Wholesale category had 39 firms, including one with 250-499 employees, but most others were small. Thirty-six Professional, Scientific, and Technical Service firms were counted in the area, none of which had more than 20 employees.

Other categories were less well represented. The Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, Transportation, and Finance and Insurance categories each had less than 30 firms, the majority of which had fewer than 10 employees. There were even fewer Educational Services, Information, and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation firms, none of significant size. There was one

large Utilities firm in the area, the BellSouth facility described in the Land Use section of this report, which was also the largest employer in the study area.

These data indicate that much of Mableton's local economy depends on Construction, Retail Trade, and Miscellaneous Services, all service-based industries. This is not unexpected. From its earliest days, Mableton was a stop along a major transportation route between Atlanta and points west. The first businesses established there engaged in retail trade. Service categories often account for large portions of employment in unincorporated suburban areas, an observation not confined to metropolitan Atlanta. Construction, Retail, and Miscellaneous Services are closely related to the growth of the kind of post-industrial economy typically found in areas far beyond the urban core.

The distribution of firms and employment in Mableton both resembles and contrasts that of the larger metropolitan area. Like Mableton, fifty-five percent of all metro firms had fewer than five employees, and less than one percent had more than 1000 employees. Retail accounted for 18 percent of total firms. Manufacturing comprised approximately 5 percent of total industry, and Transportation and Wholesale comprised 3 percent. These proportions were all similar to those in Mableton.

Other service-based industries were prominent in Atlanta's regional economy to an extent they were not in Mableton. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services were 15 percent of all metro firms but barely 5 percent of Mableton firms. Miscellaneous Services, 17 percent of all Mableton firms, were only 7 percent of the metropolitan total; Accommodation and Food Services were 9 percent of the metro but only 5 percent of Mableton.

The comparison between the economies of Mableton and metropolitan Atlanta is meant to convey context. Small geographic areas in large urban regions often develop economic specializations, like miniature states or nations. Considering the likelihood of such variance, the distribution of firms in Mableton's economy fits the general image of how the local economy of one suburb in the context of a vast service-based region would be structured.

## 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS INVENTORY

The following descriptions pertain to existing land uses and transportation facilities in the Historic Mableton study area.

### 2.1 Existing Land Use and Development

There are seven different land uses found in the Mableton study area. These uses are clustered in sections of the study area according to the design and intensity of transportation corridors. A map has been included that shows the geography of local land use. The following descriptions of the use categories are provided to clarify the types of structures found in each area. These descriptions adhere to the standards for land use classifications set forth by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

- *Residential, single-family*: contains detached and attached, single-family housing units and townhouses.
- *Residential, multi-family*: contains single apartment buildings and multi-building complexes, duplexes, and triplexes.
- *Commercial*: contains non-industrial business uses including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities; these uses may be located in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.
- *Public/Institutional*: contains certain state, federal, or local government uses and institutional land uses; these include all government buildings, libraries, police and fire stations, post offices, schools, churches, cemeteries, and hospitals.
- *Industrial*: contains land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, distribution centers, and warehouses.
- *Transportation/Communication/Utilities*: contains power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, public transit facilities, airports, and utility easements.
- *Park/Recreation/Conservation*: contains land dedicated to active and passive recreational uses; can be publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, golf courses, nature preserves, public parks, and recreation centers.
- *Undeveloped*: contains land not developed for a specific use or land that was developed for a particular use but that has been abandoned; includes woodlands, pasture land, water bodies, and undeveloped portions of subdivisions.
- *Agriculture/Forestry*: contains land dedicated to farming, agriculture, or commercial timber harvesting.

Single-family houses in the study area, mostly post-WWII era, are set on quarter acre lots or smaller, and largely oriented to automobiles, with prominent driveways and garages. They cluster in the area west of Church Street.

The few multi-family buildings in the study area are scattered. One two-story building fronts Carol Circle, two buildings share a parcel fronting Old Floyd Road, and a third group of small duplexes is arrayed around a cul-de-sac at the end of Walker Drive. These structures were constructed in the late-1960s and exhibit design of little note or significance.

The commercial structures in the area are more diverse. A small stretch of Front Street has several small brick buildings dating from the earliest days of Mableton, though none are currently used for their original purpose. Nearby, between Veterans Memorial Highway and the railroad is the Barnes

Hardware Store building, a 19<sup>th</sup> century core modified over the course of a century. A few newer commercial structures sit at the corner of Old Floyd Road and Mable Street. BellSouth owns and operates a large but poorly designed facility on Church Street, near the historic center of the area. A handful of other commercial buildings, auto-oriented and one-story, line Floyd Road and Veterans Memorial Highway.

A small industrial cluster, occupying retrofitted structures, sits in the middle of the historic area along Front Street. Another group of buildings is strung north-south along Old Floyd Road, south of Walker Drive. These structures largely date from the 1950s and 1960s. They are hardly distinguishable in style from nearby commercial structures, and demonstrate no significant design features.

The Mableton First Baptist Church is the largest and most centrally located use in the study area. The one-story, 1950s-era Mableton Elementary School occupies a site in the northwestern corner of the area; a new Boys and Girls Club building faces Floyd Road.

The large BellSouth facility situated near the center of the study area is the primary Transportation/Communication/Utilities use. In addition to occupying a significant space in Old Mableton, the operation is a major employer, housing between 250 and 500 employees. Despite this, the building presents a blank façade to the street and is surrounded by a barbed wire-topped fence. A large surface parking lot occupies a large portion of the lot.

Parks/Recreation/Conservation land is confined to a small cluster of parcels in the northwestern quadrant of the study area. The square park is adjacent to the school and used as an activity area for children during the academic year.

There are a number of undeveloped and vacant parcels in the study area. One abandoned building along Front Street is significant to Mableton's history and should be preserved and retrofitted for contemporary use. Several vacant parcels front Clay Street along the northern boundary of the study area. One important vacant lot, a gateway at the corner of Old Floyd and Clay Roads, has been purchased for the construction of a new convenience store/gas station. Two other relatively large vacant parcels are clustered near the intersection of Carol Circle and Fontaine Road.

There is currently no agriculture/forestry land in Mableton.

## **2.2 Existing Transportation Infrastructure**

The purpose of this transportation study is to summarize and document existing transportation, land use and development information by site reconnaissance, literature/report review of relevant traffic studies. The study included a review of the following documents: The Cobb County Comprehensive Plan; the Cobb County Zoning Code as related to traffic and vehicles, the Cobb County Development Standards, relevant Transportation Oriented Developments literature, and other development related to the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan.

### **2.2.1 Existing Road Network**

A reconnaissance survey was conducted to document and inventory the existing transportation and environmental resources in the study area. In addition, the transportation component identifies existing deficiencies in the transportation network.

*Roadway Corridor Inventory:*



*US 78/Veteran's Memorial Highway and Norfolk Southern Railroad:* This is a major east-west five-lane regional roadway with a posted speed limit of 45 mph. It serves as a primary transportation corridor for the project area and is lined with commercial and industrial land uses. It intersects Church Street under two-way stop conditions, Old Floyd Road as a signalized intersection, and Floyd Road as a signalized intersection. Additionally, US 78 parallels the very active Norfolk Southern Railroad, which has two tracks at the Church Street grade-crossing at railroad milepost # 137.90, and is protected by lights, gates, and bells (see Figures 3 and 4, in appendix A).

Other roadways traversed by the railroad to the east of the Church Street grade crossing include Old Floyd Road and Floyd Road as an underpass. Major intersections on this roadway would include the signalized intersections of Old Floyd Road and Floyd Road.

*Daniel Street:* This roadway is a two way residential street, with a posted speed limit of 25 mph. It intersects with Center Street (see Figure 21), and also Mable Street under 4-way stop conditions.

*Clay Road:* This roadway forms the northern boundary of the study area. It is a two-lane arterial roadway with a posted speed limit of 45 mile per hour, and it intersects Church Street at the crest of a horizontal curve, under 4-way stop conditions with a flashing beacon (see Figures 19 and 20). A sidewalk currently exists on the southern side of eastbound Clay Road, and is currently well maintained and provides a safe separation for pedestrians from the vehicular traffic traveling eastbound on the roadway. Additionally, adequate school related warning signs are also posted on the eastbound side of the roadway prior to its intersection with Church Street. Clay Road intersects Old Floyd Road at a signalized intersection with turn lanes on all approaches at the intersection. The U.S. post office is located on the northern side of the intersection (see Figure 13). Additionally, crosswalks with push button pedestrian lights are provided on all approaches of this intersection. At the eastern end, Clay Road meets with Floyd Road at a signalized intersection (T-intersection), which is provided with turn lanes at the approaches to the intersection, pedestrian crosswalks, and push-button pedestrian lights.

*Floyd Road:* This is a five-lane arterial roadway with a posted speed limit of 40 mph within the study area. The Robert Mable House is located on the northeast corner of the study area boundary. Other major facilities, the Silver Comet Trail that is a major multiuse trail in Cobb County, crosses Floyd Road approximately a mile to the north of the project limits. Floyd Road is primarily lined with commercial land uses in the study area.

Other major north-south roadway corridors in the study area include the following: Peak Street, Church Street, And Old Floyd Road. Other east-west roadways include: Front Street, Mable Street, Center Street, School Way, Prospect Street, Carol Circle and Fontaine Road.

*Church Street* is a major north-south, two-lane roadway with a posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour. It provides access between the study area's northern boundary (Clay Street) and the southern boundary, US 78/Veterans Memorial Highway in the study area. In addition it intersects with several other smaller east-west oriented streets, Front Street, Center Street, Mable Street, School Way, Prospect Street and Clay Road under 4-way stop conditions and with a flashing beacon. Additionally, pedestrian crosswalks have been provided on all approaches of the intersection. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the street. However field observations indicate a discontinuity in the existing sidewalk particularly on the western side of northbound Church Street, between School Way and Center Street. The Mableton Elementary School is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Church Street with School Way. Land uses along Church Street include commercial, institutional and residential uses. Having intersections with Church Street are Center Street, Mable Street, Avery Street, Prospect Street Peak Street, and Front Street which are all 15 feet wide, two-

way, residential streets with grassy shoulders and open drainage structures. Speed humps are placed appropriately on these streets to calm speeding traffic.

*School Way* is a one-way east to west roadway, with on-street parking delineated on the northern side of the roadway for school buses. A graveled parking lot parallels the roadway on its southern side of the Mableton Elementary School facing School Way. The northwest corner of the Church Street intersection with School Way has a sidewalk integrated with curb-extensions with steps leading to a pedestrian walkway on School Way. Street parking is provided on the west side of northbound Church Street in front of the school with an adjacent lane striped for carpools (see Figure 18). School crossing signs have been provided at mid-block on Church Street at its intersection with Avery Street (see Figure 17).

*Fontaine Road* is a winding roadway that approaches Floyd Road along a descending curve (see Figure 16). This intersection is signalized and provided with crosswalks. The northbound and southbound approaches on Floyd Road are provided with median dividers physically separating the northbound and southbound traffic on this roadway.

*Old Floyd Road* is a 30 mph, north-south two-lane roadway, lined with businesses and residential uses. The northern end of Old Floyd Road meets with Clay Road and is signalized. The southeastern part of the intersection houses old remnants of a previous alternative alignment of Old Floyd Road, and apparently acts as an access road to Old Floyd Road for houses on the eastern side of the roadway. The old alignment is currently barricaded. Moving south on Old Floyd Road, the notable intersection that indicates potential concern was that of Carol Circle. This side street has stop condition with an approach on a steep gradient, and visibility for traffic turning left or right is restricted due to the presence of houses on either side of the approach.

### 2.2.2 Road, Bike and Pedestrian Facilities Assessment

The following section identifies deficiencies in the roadway network, pedestrian network and bicycle transportation as initially determined through a visual windshield survey. A thorough reconnaissance survey was conducted for the study area. Existing deficiencies were documented with pictures (see appendix A) and a map identifying the condition of existing sidewalks. The existing deficiencies are identified in the table below.

#	Roadway Segments - Identified Deficiencies	Documenting Pictures
1.	<p><b><i>Veteran's Memorial Highway between Daniel Street and Floyd Road</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Pavement surface weathered out with cracks and faded striping.</li> <li>ii) Sidewalks of insufficient width and poorly maintained.</li> <li>iii) Intersection with Church Street has poor sight distance and has short turning lanes and insufficient braking distance</li> <li>iv) Lack of advance warning signs of approaching side streets.</li> </ul>	

#	Roadway Segments - Identified Deficiencies	Documenting Pictures
2.	<p><b><i>Daniel Street between Clay Road and Mable Street</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Sidewalks nonexistent along both sides of Daniel Street.</li> <li>ii) Forms a staggered intersection with Center Street. Stop signs or pavement markings nonexistent on southbound Daniel Street, or westbound Center Street confuses drivers due to the configuration of the intersection.</li> </ul>	Figure 21
3.	<p><b><i>Clay Road between Daniel Street and Floyd Road.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Lack of sidewalks on the northern side of the roadway.</li> <li>ii) Speed limit of 45 mph high when approaching along the curve to its intersection with Church Street. Drivers have a tendency to continue speeding on Church Street above the posted speed limit of 30 mph. This is potentially dangerous to pedestrians and school children of Mableton Elementary School, located approximately 500 feet south of this intersection on Church Street.</li> <li>iii) Limited sight distance around the intersection of Church Street due to the curving approach on eastbound Clay Road.</li> <li>iv) Missing link in sidewalk on the southeast side of its intersection with Old Floyd Road and northern side of the roadway to the east of this intersection.</li> </ul>	Figures 19 and 20
4.	<p><b><i>Floyd Road between Clay Road and US 78/Veteran's Memorial Highway</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Lack of sidewalks on both sides of the street.</li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b><i>Church Street between Veterans Memorial Highway and Clay Road.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Intersection with Front Street and Peak Street has a staggered configuration without pavement markings/ or faded railroad related advance pavement markings, landscape growing out of bounds particularly near the grade crossing making pavement striping sufficiently invisible for nighttime drivers.</li> <li>ii) Discontinuity of sidewalks on the eastern side of northbound Church Street</li> <li>iii) Damaged sidewalks and curbs near the northeast corner of its intersection with Front Street, absence of ADA compliant ramps, potentially dangerous landscaping particularly for wheel chair users, children riding bikes and also for pedestrians using sidewalks during night hours.</li> <li>iv) The termination of existing sidewalk on the northeast corner of its intersection with Avery Street and also on the west side of the roadway.</li> <li>v) Sidewalks have insufficient width of particularly on northbound Church Street.</li> <li>vi) The broken sidewalk surface on the westside of Church Street near its intersection with Clay Road</li> </ul>	Figures 3, 8, 9, 17, 18, 19

#	Roadway Segments - Identified Deficiencies	Documenting Pictures
6.	<p><b><i>Old Floyd Road between Veteran's Memorial Highway and Clay Road</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Lack of sidewalks on the western side of northbound Old Floyd Road overpass over the Norfolk Southern Railroad. Existing sidewalks on the eastern side of the overpass need maintenance.</li> <li>ii) Lack of ADA compliant ramps on the northern side of the intersection with Front Street and Fontaine Road, cracked sidewalks, faded pedestrian crosswalk marking, and deteriorating pavement surfaces.</li> <li>iii) Lack of sidewalks on the western side of northbound Old Floyd Road, and missing links in existing sidewalk network near Clay road; traffic speeding above posted speed limits, lack of approaching crossroad warning signs on northbound Old Floyd Road near Carol Circle.</li> </ul>	Figures 12, 13, 14, 15, and 22.
7.	<p><b><i>Front Street between Peak Street and Old Floyd Road.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Lack of sidewalks on the southern side of eastbound Front Street.</li> <li>ii) Broken pavement edges especially on the southern side eastbound Front Street.</li> </ul>	Figures 5 and 6
8.	<p><b><i>Alley Street between Church Street and Daniel Street.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Lack of signs stating it is a one-way street.</li> </ul>	
9.	<p><b><i>Center Street and Mable Street between Daniel Street and Church Street</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Lack of sidewalks on both sides of the street, ADA compliant ramps, and inadequate drainage facilities for the roadway.</li> <li>ii) Narrow street widths, tight turning radius, particularly near the four corners of the intersections.</li> </ul>	Figures 10 and 11
10.	<p><b><i>Prospect Street between Daniel Street and Church Street</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Sidewalks absent on both sides of the street and deteriorating pavement surfaces near the end of the street.</li> </ul>	
11.	<p><b><i>School Way between Church Street and Peak Street</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Unpaved parking lot bordering the cemetery on the southern side of the roadway.</li> </ul>	

### 2.2.3 Existing Transit Services Inventory

The primary transit system which services the study area is Cobb County's public transit system, Cobb Community Transit (CCT). The earliest metro Atlanta public transit system outside of MARTA, CCT began operations in July 1989. County staff are responsible for planning, marketing, and management of CCT services. (Cobb County Comprehensive Plan). A private firm, under the contract with county, maintains and operates service.

CCT provides fixed route bus service linking residential areas to employment, educational, medical and commercial facilities in many parts of Cobb County as well as Atlanta. Since CCT began operations in 1989, ridership has greatly increased. In 1999, bus ridership was in excess of 2.7 million passengers (Source: <http://cobbdot.org/cct.htm>). CCT now utilizes 53 buses to transport patrons on 13 local and two express bus routes. Buses operate on major corridors in Cobb, with several routes accessing major Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) bus stops and rail stations. All buses accommodate wheel chairs giving CCT the distinction of being one of the few transit systems accessible to the disabled from the time of startup.

In addition to standard wheelchair accessibility, CCT also provides specialized services for individuals with disabilities-CCT Paratransit Services. This service increases the mobility for individuals unable to access a bus at designated stops. CCT currently uses 15 mid-size buses to operate the paratransit service in an area  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile on either side of CCT bus routes (<http://cobbdot.org/cct.htm>). Additionally, CCT offers service to and from the Georgia Dome for the Atlanta Falcons' football games.

In an ongoing effort to improve the accessibility of CCT's services to citizens, several improvements are currently underway, including the installation of benches and/or shelters at high ridership stops and sidewalk improvements in correlation with Cobb County's Road Improvement Program.

With regards to the Historic Mableton study area, CCT operates a bi-directional route (Route # 30) that operates Monday through Saturday from early morning until night. Route 30 serves as the only north-south route that services Floyd Road within the study area between its northeastern terminus and southeastern terminus. Recent changes have been made to Route 30 to include longer weekday operating hours (5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.) and longer weekend operating hours on Saturday (7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.). (Source: <http://cobbdot.org/cct.htm>).

Since its inception, CCT fares have increased only twice to the current one-way rate per person of \$1.25. Express fares are currently \$3.00 one-way and \$4.00 round trip. This fare structure is in conjunction with a free transfer policy that provides the patrons of CCT an opportunity to ride more than one bus to reach their destination. In addition, the "reciprocal fare agreement" policy with MARTA enables the CCT users to transfer from one system to another at no additional charge.

A schedule of the CCT and also the Community Transit Fare Schedule could be found on the Internet at <http://cobbdot.org/cct.htm>.

#### **2.2.4 Existing Rail Facilities and Conditions**

Mableton had passenger rail service for several years prior to the 1929 stock market crash. Up to 18 trains stopped every day, when there were no paved roads in Cobb County. In 1930, Bankhead Highway, now known as Veteran's Memorial Highway, was paved thus opening opportunities for private automobiles, which ultimately brought in the disappearance of the rail services (Interview with Harold Glore, *Cobb County Oral History Series*, 1984).

Currently, two main freight rail routes pass through Mableton and then branch off at the City of Austell, one going to Birmingham, Alabama, and the other going to Chattanooga, Tennessee. (*Georgia Department of Transportation Intercity Rail Plan, the Operating and Physical database, prepared for the Georgia Department of Transportation, by Rail Transport Systems, November 1996*). There are approximately 60 to 75 train crossings during the day and night at Church Street grade crossing. The permanent speed restriction for the freight trains using the grade crossing at

Church Street is 50 mph and the maximum allowable speed is 40 mph (Source: Norfolk Southern Time Table and Georgia Rail Consultants).

Georgia Rail Consultants (GRC) is a joint venture retained by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and Georgia Rail Passenger Authority (GRPA) to carry out the work needed for Federal environmental clearance and railroad agreements to allow passenger service on the railways as part of the Georgia Rail Passenger Program. GRC estimates that there would be approximately 1% to 2% increase in the number of trains per year in the future on the two freight routes that pass through Mableton. The speed limit for potential passenger rail service at this crossing is currently estimated at 60 mph. The potential passenger rail service on the currently active freight line is not expected to be operational until the year 2012.

## **2.3 Environmental Conditions**

A preliminary survey of the proposed project area has been conducted in order to identify potential ecological, historical and physical resources within the project area. All of these factors could affect requirements necessary to implement a redevelopment project in the area.

### **2.3.1 Social Environment**

The study area would best be described as an urban neighborhood that is mostly residential with corridor-type commercial development along Floyd Road and Veteran's Memorial Highway, which are both major arterial streets. There is also a small concentration of commercial/industrial development along the railroad at Front Street, which extends up Old Floyd Road. This area appears to contain several older establishments which were probably first active when Mableton began as a railroad-oriented community.

### **2.3.2 Cultural Environment/Historic Resources**

#### *Historic Resources Inventory*

There are approximately 25 resources in the Historic Mableton Redevelopment Project Area which are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The majority of these resources are located in the southwest area of Historic Mableton, along Front Street and Church Street. Resources consist of brick commercial buildings, bungalows, Georgian cottages, side and front-gabled cottages, hipped-roof cottages, hall-parlor cottages, central hall cottages, gabled-ell cottages, a Queen Anne house, Folk Victorian cottages, and Craftsman bungalows. The Southern Railroad, which runs along the southern boundary of the study area parallel to Veteran's Memorial Highway, is also a historic resource of the project area.

The commercial buildings of old Mableton are located on Front Street and Veteran's Memorial Highway along either side of the railroad tracks (see pictures 1-13, appendix B). The buildings currently serve as a hardware store, a Mason lodge, office space, or stand vacant. Because a number of resources are clustered in this area, this commercial area of Front Street has the most potential for historic resource development within the study area. Also located on Front Street within this same area are two houses: a Georgian cottage (see picture 7), now serving as office space and a large Queen Anne mansion (966 Front Street, see pictures 14 and 15) currently being used as a private residence. Further research should be conducted on the history of the c.1910s Queen Anne style house, due to its grandeur for the surrounding area. Unfortunately two of the three historic resources on this block are completely surrounded by a six-foot high stockade wooden privacy fence, thus, severely blocking the view of this structure and the structure on south side of Mable Street.

Though old Mableton possesses several notable, historic, vernacular-style houses (see pictures 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 24, 28), these resources are greatly dispersed within the more dominant number of ineligible and non-historic houses. Most of the older houses in the area have had significant alterations made or have been demolished. While the area would likely not qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district, Mableton has an interesting history and is worthy of further research. Mableton's most developed history stems from the Robert Mable House, which is listed on the National Register, located on Floyd Road, approximately two blocks northeast of the study area. The house is located on several acres of land and houses the South Cobb Arts Alliance. It also serves as a hub of cultural activity for South Cobb County. An amphitheater is currently being constructed which will add to the cultural resources of the area.

Historic institutional buildings in the area include the Mableton Elementary School building, which was built in 1952. This building will be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2002). Not an eligible historic building, but nonetheless noteworthy to the history of Mableton, is the Mableton First Baptist Church that was established in Mableton in the 1880s. In 1886, school was also held in this church building, until another school building was erected behind the church.

### ***2.3.3 Natural Environment***

Surveys of the study area were completed to determine the presence of waters or wetlands and to identify any potential areas of habitat capable of supporting threatened and endangered wildlife. These surveys did not identify any wetlands or waters except for a small man-made pond at the southwest corner of Church Street and Mable Street. We also identified a series of roadside ditches; however, it appears that they are ephemeral in nature and only flow during rain events. There are also no floodplains, wild and scenic rivers or farmland located in the project study area.

The Federal and State list of species that have distributional ranges in Cobb County has been reviewed. Suitable habitat for the Bald eagle, Red-cockaded woodpecker, Cherokee darter, Gulf moccasinshell mussel, and Michaux's sumac does not exist in the project study area. Although the project area does contain some areas of mature forested habitat, including some very large oaks, the habitat is extremely fragmented by the existing development making the area unsuitable as significant wildlife habitat.

### ***2.3.4 Potential Environmental Concerns***

Federal funding would prohibit adversely affecting natural mineral sources or natural sources of energy. There are no proven or known mineral resources or energy reserves such as oil or natural gas in the proposed project area; therefore, involvement with these types of resources is not anticipated.

During field inspections, there were identified several locations that potentially contain underground storage tanks (ust's) and or other hazardous materials. These sites include a gas station on Clay Road, an automotive repair shop along Veteran's Memorial Highway, an industrial facility at Front Street and Church Street, several commercial/industrial facilities along Old Floyd Road, and an auto repair facility on Daniel Street. Further examination of these sites for environmental contamination due to ust's should be conducted in advance of any redevelopment activities.

### 3. STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

#### 3.1 Public Involvement

The centerpiece of the strategic planning process for the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan has been the involvement of the public. Input from public forums and surveys has contributed greatly to planning analysis and recommendations.

##### 3.1.1 Public Input

Public involvement for Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan was conducted in an integrated and comprehensive manner in order to ensure successful completion and support of the Plan. The techniques used to inform and involve the public included Public Meetings, Design Charettes, comment opportunities via postal mail and e-mail, a project website ([www.andpi.org/mableton](http://www.andpi.org/mableton)) with a bulletin board for response and online discussion, and special presentations to core stakeholder groups.

The first step in the public involvement process was to identify and establish a database of stakeholders. This database was an ongoing list that was updated on a regular basis as more stakeholders were added through out the process. The stakeholder database included the following types of groups and individuals:

- Elected and public officials
- Neighborhood and civic organizations
- Regulatory agencies
- Business groups
- Homeowners and residents with-in and near the study area
- Other interested parties

The database served as a primary mailing and contact list and was continually updated as more stakeholders were added. A total of four public meetings were conducted during the public involvement process. An additional presentation was made to the South Cobb Business Association at the Freeman Poole Senior Center on September 5, 2001. All public meetings were held at the First Baptist Church of Mableton. The church's central location within the study area made it the best choice. The table below summarizes the public meetings by date, time and number of attendees.

	Meeting Name	Time	Date	Attendees*
1.	Kick-Off Meeting	6:30 pm	7/23/01	114
2.	Initial Findings/ Visual Preference Survey	6:30 pm	8/27/01	129
3.	Community Design Workshop	6:30 pm to 9:00 pm	10/1/01	98
4.	Draft Plan Presentation/Open House	4:30 pm to 8:30 pm	11/5/01	120

\*Numbers indicate attendees who signed in at each meeting

##### Public Meeting #1 – Kick-Off Meeting 7/23/01

The Kick-off Meeting served as the official introduction to the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan to the Mableton Community. The purpose of the meeting was to familiarize the community with the purpose of the study and to begin the visioning process. The visioning session



allowed the participants to voice desires and concerns related to the study area and recommendations for the outcome of the plan. The meeting also explained the public involvement process to the participants including the upcoming meetings.

#### Public Meeting #2 – Initial Findings/ Visual Preference Survey 8/27/01

The second meeting presented the initial findings of the inventory and analysis of the study area conducted by the team. Based on these findings and feedback from the participants, the goals and objectives of the plan were further refined. The team also conducted a Visual Preference Survey (VPS). The purpose of the VPS was to develop an understanding of the preferred land use types and development designs that the community wishes to see in their community. The results from the VPS guided the team in determining the design and style of developments, amenities and infrastructure improvements that would best suit the desires and needs of the community. The details of the VPS are discussed in Section 3.2.

#### South Cobb Business Association Presentation 9/5/01

A large number of stakeholders were members of the South Cobb Business Association. The team made a presentation at one of the group's regular monthly meetings. An introduction was given by Michael Hughes, Director of the Cobb County Department of Economic Development, followed by a project description by Lee Walton, Project Manager. A map of the study area was also displayed during the presentation. Association members asked questions and gave input during a question and answer session following the presentation.

#### Public Meeting #3 – Community Design Workshop 10/1/01

The Design Charette was designed to allow the community to provide input on specific land use and transportation issues concerning the study area. The details of the Community Design Workshop are discussed in Section 3.3.

#### Public Meeting #4 – Open House/Draft Plan Presentation 11/5/01

The fourth meeting presented the draft plan to the community. The meeting started with an open house for the first two hours where participants could review the draft and make comments in verbal or written form. After the first two hours, a formal presentation of the plan was given followed by an additional hour of open house. During the open house, several maps were on display:

- A scaled Draft Plan Concept Map showing potential designs and developments.
- An existing Land Use Map
- A Future Land Use Concept Map
- Group maps from the Design Charette Workshop

#### 3.1.2 *Identified Stakeholder Input*

Stakeholder input was received throughout the planning process. During the visioning session held at the Kick Off Meeting, common themes developed which continued to reflect stakeholder input during the remainder of the planning process. These common themes are summarized below:

- *Preservation* – There is existing value to be preserved in Mableton, particularly in the community's homes and neighborhoods. The idea of naming the core area of Mableton "Historic

Mableton” is popular, as well as the use of phrases such as “preservation and improvement rather than “redevelopment.” Homes and neighborhoods in Mableton need protection from the negative effects of commercial intrusion and poor property maintenance.

- *Renovation* – Assistance is needed to renovate homes and to enhance the neighborhood. Renovation of historic buildings such as the “Old Fire Station” is also desired.
- *Community Character* – The idea of returning Mableton to “the way it once was” is popular...including such characteristics as small shops, unique restaurants, single-family homes, pedestrian-friendliness, and general neatness.
- *Public Safety* – There exists a need for environmental improvements (demolition of vacant structures) as well as improved police presence.
- *Focal Point* – Some type of park, recreation center, civic building, etc. is desired to serve as the “center” of Mableton.
- *Commuter Rail* – There is a desire for the revival of an historic train station element of the community, but concern exists that the station will generate too much parking and traffic.
- *Infrastructure* – Transportation (roads) and other infrastructure (water/sewer) should be enhanced in order to accommodate community improvements.

### 3.1.3 Project Website

An increasingly large portion of the public looks to the Internet as a primary source of community information. The World Wide Web offers an excellent opportunity to make information available to the public as well as to elicit public input. A project website was established for the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan at the address [www.andpi.org/mableton](http://www.andpi.org/mableton). This website is linked to the official Cobb County government website, [www.cobbcounty.org](http://www.cobbcounty.org), and has been actively used by the Mableton community as a source of information. The website also includes a bulletin board for comment and discussion.

## 3.2 Visual Preference Survey

The Visual Preference Survey (VPS) is a public involvement tool that is increasingly used in community planning. Different from statistical surveys and data analysis, the VPS seeks to identify community preferences for design and development by presenting a series of images for comparative ranking. Results of the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan Visual Preference Survey have been used to develop recommendations within this study. A comprehensive report of survey results is included in appendix G.

## 3.3 Community Design Workshop

Following the initial visioning process and the Visual Preference Survey, the key event in the Public Involvement process was the Historic Mableton Community Design Workshop. Intended to give community stakeholders a direct opportunity to experiment with planning issues in Mableton, the workshop provided a forum for open discussions about the potential of Mableton and has resulted in valuable community input.

### **3.3.1 Process and Results**

The Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan Community Design Workshop was held on Monday, October 1 at First Baptist Church on Church Street in Mableton. A full house of area residents, workers, business and property owners heard reports of preliminary recommendations from the planning team before spending an hour working in groups. Fourteen workshop groups prepared conceptual designs for the future of the Mableton study area using the materials provided by the planning team. At the end of the evening, volunteers from several groups presented their work to the entire crowd. Some of the major ideas from the workshop include the following:

- Preserve single family homes in the western portion of Historic Mableton
- Revitalize the historic Front Street commercial area
- Locate a future Commuter Rail station near the site of the historic Mableton train station
- Encourage quality restaurants to locate in Historic Mableton
- Build a new police precinct and a new County library or community center in Historic Mableton
- Redevelop Old Floyd Road into a mixed use and “main street” corridor
- Preserve trees and establish parks along the railroad and in other parts of Historic Mableton
- Improve sidewalks, streets and structures throughout Historic Mableton

Specific results have been derived from a detailed review of each group’s mapped and written suggestions and are included in appendix H.

### **3.4 Community Vision and Goals Summary**

Based on the public involvement and visioning process, a concise list of goals has been established to guide the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan and recommendations. These goals are organized under the headings of “preservation” and “improvement” consistent with the focus of the plan.

#### *Preservation Goals*

- Preserve the stability of single-family residential areas.
- Preserve community friendliness and small town character of Historic Mableton.
- Preserve historic homes, buildings, institutions, and properties.
- Preserve trees and environmental features.

#### *Improvement Goals*

- Improve community identity with greater organization and promotional activities.
- Improve community attractiveness and aesthetics through enforcement of existing codes, establishment of appropriate new guidelines, and public improvements.
- Increase community population and economic growth through appropriate development of vacant properties and redevelopment of underused properties.
- Improve community connectivity through enhancements to the local transportation networks for cars, bicycles, and pedestrians and linkages to the regional transportation system.
- Increase local involvement in the community development process.

## **4 STUDY AREA ANALYSIS: NEEDS, OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Land Use and Development**

As a result of its history, existing infrastructure and, most importantly, its concerned residents, business owners and organizations, the Historic Mableton community possesses the potential to realize dramatic revitalization. Resulting from the public's involvement in this planning process is a strong concurrence of opinion that Mableton can become a true "live-work-play" community and a focal point in south Cobb County. It is also recognized, however, that significant changes in land use and development are required to achieve such qualities. Following are analyses and recommendations regarding the general land use categories in the study area.

#### **4.1.1 Residential Land Use**

For a long period of time, residential land use has been a stabilizing factor in the Historic Mableton area. Single family homes, some of which date back to the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, have housed generations of families who have contributed to the Mableton community. It is not surprising, therefore, that the continued stability of the residential component of Historic Mableton is of key importance to the community's future.

The primary concentration of homes in the Historic Mableton area is located in the area to the west of Church Street. These blocks of single family homes comprise a neighborhood with a rich character that should be preserved. Though generally stable, there is a threat of devaluation of residential property here due to the obsolescence of some structures and deferred maintenance of private properties and public infrastructure. Rehabilitation efforts are needed to improve homes and public rights-of-way. Such neighborhood improvements may be coupled with infill development of new homes if encouraged by zoning flexibility and community development initiatives. Ultimately, this single-family residential neighborhood of Historic Mableton can increase greatly in value and desirability by capitalizing on traditional notions of neighborhood design and structure.

Residential properties to the east of Church Street are generally less incorporated into recognizable neighborhoods. These properties include some historic homes, other single-family residences, and a multi-family units. The lack of coherence and neighborhood structure east of Church Street demands a more intentional redevelopment effort that can capitalize on the mixed-use nature of Historic Mableton and its future potential as a Transit Oriented Development hub. Infrastructure is available to support higher densities of well-planned residential and mixed use development, including single-family townhouse-type housing units and multi-family, ownership and rental housing units in traditional arrangements with common open space.

#### **4.1.2 Commercial Land Use**

For the most part, commercial properties in Historic Mableton do not offer the types of character and services that the community residents desire. There is an adequate amount of commercial services, primarily located along Veterans Memorial Highway and Floyd Road, to serve the basic needs of the population. There does not exist, however, commercial development of the small town, pedestrian oriented quality that is desired by many area residents. Such commercial qualities can not be easily introduced into oversized corridors, however the relative density and connectedness of Historic Mableton offers possibilities for such commercial redevelopment.

#### **4.1.3 Institutional and Public Land Use**

Two long-term Mableton institutions, Mableton Elementary School and the First Baptist Church of Mableton, are key components of Historic Mableton. A third, the Boys Club located on Fontaine Road, is currently increasing in size and activity. For Historic Mableton to become a truly vibrant live-work-play community in the future, these institutions must be maintained and additional ones added. The Mable House and Amphitheatre, for example, will undoubtedly bring an entirely new dimension to Mableton's entertainment and economic potential.

Future public investments in the Mableton area should be encouraged to locate within the Historic Mableton area, alongside these existing institutions. The future development of a commuter rail station, for example, would greatly enhance the residential and commercial potential of Historic Mableton. Likewise, development of a new community facility to serve the broader area, such as a library or community center, would likely attract private investment in housing and commerce. Any such options in the future should be carefully considered and located so as to benefit the broader community development interests.

#### **4.1.4 Mixed Land Use**

A Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is a human scale, walkable community with moderate to high residential densities and a mixed-use core (*Cobb Development Standards*, 2001).

The inclusion of a mixture of land uses is a vital component of a traditional neighborhood. Historic Mableton has been a mixed-use community from its early days, as was the case with nearly all pre-World War communities. Therefore, the precedent and patterns exist in Historic Mableton to achieve with relative ease the type of mixed-use, traditional neighborhood environment that is the target of today's Traditional Neighborhood Developments.

Certain areas of Historic Mableton, such as the single-family residential blocks west of Church Street, would be appropriately preserved as single use districts. Much of the remainder of the community, however, currently has a mixture of residential, institutional, and commercial uses and would benefit greatly from appropriately designed mixed-use redevelopment. Models for the types of mixed-use development that the Mableton community has found desirable include Post Riverside in metro Atlanta and the Orenco Station Transit Oriented Development area near Portland, Oregon.

While a mixed-use neighborhood benefits from the integration of different land uses, there are certain conditions that must be met in order for the neighborhood to appear and function properly. Many of these conditions are described in the following section concerning Urban Design Recommendations (Section 4.5). A distributed network of local streets is also important. The historic pattern of blocks with alleys in the core area of Historic Mableton is an ideal arrangement for a mixed-use, traditional neighborhood. Regardless of design conditions and the transportation network, however, there are certain land uses today that pose the threat of a nuisance to a mixed use community. Industrial and commercial uses that have noise levels or noxious odors that are incompatible with residential land uses and that cannot be mitigated with design measures should not be included within a mixed-use, traditional neighborhood environment.

### **4.2 Traffic and Transportation**

Overall traffic and transportation conditions have been evaluated for the Historic Mableton study area. Based upon the traffic analysis, existing and future operations of the roadways and critical

intersections will be determined and recommendations for improvements will be made. The improvements will be tailored to accommodate future land use plans and potential infill developments in the study area.

#### *4.2.1 Traffic Conditions Analysis*

Traffic operations were analyzed on certain critical intersections in the study area. The critical intersections chosen were those whose traffic operations influence the overall operations of traffic in the study area. The intersections are as follows:

1. The intersection of Church Street and SR 8/ Veteran's Memorial Highway: This intersection was chosen due to the proximity of the Church Street grade crossing to a major state highway, SR 8/Veteran's Memorial Highway.
2. The signalized intersection of SR.8/ Veteran's Memorial Highway and Floyd Road: Floyd Road is a major north-south arterial roadway connecting with a regional roadway corridor, S.R. 8. It provides freight access to major interstate highways such as I-285. The existing operational performance of its intersection with Church Street intersection is critical, since the crossing of Norfolk Southern railway with Church Street is located approximately 200 feet to the north of the study intersection.
3. The signalized intersection of Floyd Road and Clay Road: Clay Road provides access from residential areas within the study area to a major arterial roadway, Floyd Road. Additionally, the impact of a traffic signal at its intersection with another roadway, Old Floyd Road approximately 300 feet to the west of the intersection under study is critical for the performance of the study intersection.
4. The 4-Way stop controlled intersection of Church Street and Clay Road: The traffic capacity of this intersection during the AM and PM peak hour is critical for its efficient operation. This is primarily due to the presence of an elementary school, located approximately 450 feet south of the proposed intersection. Additionally, the operational performance of this intersection to the east and south of the study intersection, is critical namely: the signalized intersection of Clay Road at Floyd Road and stop-controlled intersection of Church Street with Mable Street.

#### *Existing Traffic Volumes:*

Peak hour turning movements were collected for all of the above critical intersections during both the morning peak period (AM) and evening peak period (PM). Intersection geometry and lane configurations were inventoried for each roadway and intersection within the study area from field observations. These volumes were adjusted for the year 2001.

#### *Intersection Capacity Analyses:*

Intersection capacity analyses were performed consistent with methodology of the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual. This methodology is the industry standard for the evaluation of intersection traffic delays. In order to facilitate this analysis, a computerized procedure known as The Highway Capacity Software (HCS, Version 4.1) from the Mctrans Center of the University of Florida, recognized by FHWA's Transportation Research Board (TRB) as a direct implementation of the procedures contained in the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual (HCM). This methodology allows the analyst to determine a "level of service" which is a descriptor of the acceptability of the intersection operational characteristics. For signalized intersections, the levels of service are described in terms of average stopped vehicle delay experienced by the intersection users.

Intersection operational efficiency is expressed qualitatively on a declining sliding scale in terms of Level of Service (LOS), which is a measure of the amount of delay and congestion experienced by motorists as they pass through an intersection. The letters “A” through “F” designates LOS.

#### *Background Traffic Growth*

A 2.5% average growth rate was assumed for the growth of traffic in the developed area of Old Historic Mableton project area. This average growth rate was determined from historical traffic volumes in the South Cobb County region in which the town of Mableton is located. Although, this growth rate is may not necessarily be indicative of future traffic growth in the study area, it provides a foundation to project existing traffic into the future.

#### *Future Traffic Conditions*

Intersection capacity analyses were performed consistent with methodology of the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual using the Highway Capacity Software.

The results of both existing and future intersection capacity analyses are presented in the table below.

<b>Summarized Intersection Capacity/LOS Analysis</b>						
Intersection	Existing Year 2001 Traffic		Year 2005 Traffic		Projected 2025 Traffic	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
SR 8/Veteran's Memorial Highway @ Church St.	C*	E*	D*	F*	F*	F*
SR 8/Veteran's Memorial Highway @ Floyd Road	F	F	F	F	F	F
Floyd Road @ Clay Road	D	C	D	C	F	F
Clay Road @ Church St.	C*	B*	D*	C*	F*	F*

\* Unsignalized intersection - LOS shown in table represents the side-street approach.

As indicated from the above analysis, the intersection of SR 8/Veteran's Memorial Highway at Church Street with side street stop condition on the approach of Church Street operates at an acceptable level of service for the side street for both the years, 2001 and 2005 AM peak hour. However, the LOS is at unacceptable level for the years 2001 and 2005 PM peak hour, and the future year 2025 AM and PM peak hours. This indicates that the congestion becomes acute with longer delays on Church Street at the intersections, which could force the queues to back up over on the grade-crossing on Church due to its proximity to this intersection. This situation coupled with the current and projected future railroad traffic, could be a major grade-crossing safety issue in the future year 2025. Hence one recommendation to counteract the situation would include closing the Church Street grade crossing. A proposed new railroad overpass to the west of this crossing along with the extension of Peak Street would handle the vehicular traffic that currently use Church Street to access SR 8/Veteran's Memorial Highway. Vehicular traffic could also use the Old Floyd Road overpass over the railroad to access Veteran's Memorial Highway that is located east of the Church Street grade crossing. Recommended improvements to the Old Floyd Road overpass include widening the bridge to include turn lanes and a sidewalk along the southbound side of Old Floyd Road to provide a connection with the existing sidewalk at Front Street.

The intersection capacity analysis results also shows that the signalized intersection of SR 8/Veteran's Memorial Highway at Floyd Road shows unacceptable levels of service during the AM and PM peak hours in the existing year 2001. This indicates that there is extreme congestion and delays

experienced by motorists at this intersection. The projected LOS for the years 2005 and 2025 indicates that the levels of service are worse both during the AM and PM peak hours. This indicates the need for additional lane improvements at this intersection.

The intersections of Floyd Road at Clay Road and Clay Street at Church Street operate at acceptable levels of traffic during the existing year 2001 and the year 2005, while the LOS in the future year 2025 shows the intersections will operate at unacceptable or failing LOS F, indicating the necessity for improvements at these intersections. One recommended improvement to step up the failing LOS in the future year 2025 includes the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Church Street and Clay Street supplemented by a traffic signal warrant study.

#### ***4.2.2 Road, Transit, Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Recommendations***

Following is a list of major recommendations for the study area that should be considered based on the evaluation of existing capacity constraints and the analysis of future conditions on existing infrastructure:

- Improve the distributed network of streets within the Historic Mableton study area. Wherever opportunities exist, connections of streets should be made in order to complete the system of blocks with alley access that was the historic pattern of Mableton.
- The grade crossing at Church Street should be closed. In conjunction with this, an alternate proposed connection to US 78/SR 8/ Veteran's Memorial Highway is recommended which includes an extension of Peak Street from its intersection with Front Street and a railroad overpass. It is recommended that the lane configuration of the connector provide include turn lanes and sidewalks that will connect with existing sidewalks on Veteran's Memorial Highway.
- To improve the LOS for the intersection of US 78/SR 8/Veteran's Memorial Highway, it will be necessary to both improve traffic-handling infrastructure and lessen traffic volumes through the introduction of transit alternatives. Recommended improvements related to traffic signals include retiming traffic signals along Floyd Road in the project corridor and also on Veteran's Memorial Highway. Additional turn lanes are recommended at this intersection.
- The Old Floyd Road overpass should include the addition of a turn lane at the intersection of US 78/SR 8/Veteran's Memorial Highway. All lanes widths are recommended to be 11 feet as a traffic calming measure and include sidewalks. Additionally, the width of the sidewalks on northbound and southbound Old Floyd Road will be reduced depending on the availability of the right-of-way on this roadway.
- A traffic signal should be installed at Church Street and Clay Street.

The following additional recommendations are derived from a detailed survey of existing conditions, deficiencies and opportunities for transportation facilities in the Historic Mableton study area.

- A potential commuter rail station scheduled to be operating at least by the year 2011 (Source: Georgia Rail Consultants, September 2001) is recommended be built on the property bordered by Front Street, Church Street, and Veteran's Memorial Highway.
- Existing sidewalks needs to be improved by reconstructing and repaving broken sidewalk surfaces on Front Street, providing missing links in sidewalks with ADA accessible ramps on



Veteran's Memorial Highway, Church Street, Old Floyd Road, and Clay Road. Additionally, new sidewalks and improved drainage facilities are recommended be built to standards on Daniel Street, northern part of Clay Road, School Way, Center Street, Peak Street, Mable Street, southern part of Front Street, Carol Circle, and Fontaine Road. The improved sidewalk network would also provide access to existing historical structures that have a potential to become activity centers like the Robert Mable House off Floyd Road, Mableton Elementary School, and the First Baptist Church of Mableton on Church Street.

- Repave and re-stripe existing roadways US 78/SR 8/Veteran's Memorial Highway, Old Floyd Road, Front Street, School Way, to improve existing infrastructure in the study area.
- Installation of appropriate road warning signs on Clay Road prior to its in order to improve the safety of existing roadways and maintain an efficient flow of existing vehicular traffic.
- Reduction in speed limits is recommended on Clay Street from 45 mph to 35 mph in facilitating safety of its intersection with Church Street. An alternative traffic calming devices would include the installation of speed humps near the intersection of Church Street. The installation of a "bulb-out" at the southern corners of the intersection of Church Street and Clay Street to enhance safety for pedestrians using crosswalks at this intersection. (A "bulb-out" refers to reducing the width of the roadway at the intersection by extending curb and gutter in the shape of a bulb around the corner of an intersection.)
- The installation of a "bulb-out" on the northwest corner of the intersection of Church Street and School Way.
- Provide feeder CCT lines to Church Street and Clay Road and other roadways not served by the current CCT system to improve accessibility to transit facilities and also improve connections between the potential commuter rail station and historic Mable House.
- Build new developments with parking tucked behind the building. This enhances the pedestrian safety and access to the buildings from the sidewalks along the roadways. Hence, pedestrians do not have to walk across parking lots to enter the building.
- Seek shared parking to eliminate the need for surface parking in front of the buildings particularly for newer developments.
- Provide bike lanes on major arterial roadways such as Clay Road, Floyd Road, and S.R. 78/Veteran's Memorial Highway and provide connections to landmark destinations such as Robert Mable House and The Silver Comet Trail.
- Provide mid-block crosswalks to improve connectivity in the sidewalk system in the area near the school and church. Well-marked crosswalks with advanced warning signs will also improve pedestrian safety.

#### **4.2.3 Transit Services**

For Historic Mableton to become a transit-oriented community in the future, it will obviously be necessary to introduce new transit options. While much attention is being paid to the planning for commuter rail facilities and services in the Atlanta region, it is apparent that the arrival of commuter rail in Mableton will be at least ten years into the future. In the meantime, transit alternatives should be incrementally introduced into Historic Mableton.

Cobb Community Transit (CCT) is most readily available to provide additional transit services to Mableton. As the Historic Mableton area redevelops and increases in residential density, CCT must concurrently provide a more accessible commuter bus service to the community. One alternative for CCT to consider would be to establish a small, local bus terminal in the location planned for a future commuter rail station in Historic Mableton. Ultimately, CCT, the commuter rail system, and other regional transit systems such as MARTA should be linked at a multi-modal facility in the heart of the community.

### **4.3 Cultural/Historic Resources**

The following is a list of ideas to develop and make best use of the historic resources within the Historic Mableton area. Public involvement should be a significant consideration regarding the development of these ideas, specifically from local residences and business owners of the Historic Mableton area:

- Develop the remaining Front Street commercial buildings, restoring historic façades. Consider returning the historic building on the northwest corner of Front and Church Streets to its original use in 1882 as a general store. Infill vacant area along the north side of Front Street with buildings, which complement surrounding historic structures (ex. brick façade commercial buildings or structures to complement the Georgian cottage also located on Front Street).
- Install an exhibit featuring Old Mableton history and photographs within the space of one of the buildings on Front Street.
- Develop vacant land area on the south side of Front Street to include transit facilities and parking areas with attractive landscaping. Take into consideration the visibility of the historic Barnes Hardware buildings just south of the railroad and this lot. Develop a rail observation exhibit/park detailing the importance and history of the railroad to the development of the Mableton area. This park exhibit would be located in the landscaped parking area, adjacent to the railroad tracks.
- Install historic lighting on Front Street
- Change street name signs to include “Historic Mableton” verbiage.
- Create gateways at both the north and south ends of Old Floyd Road with signage and attractive landscaping. There is a large vacant lot on the southwest corner of Floyd Road and Clay Road, which is clearly visible by Clay and Floyd Road traffic. This lot would make for an attractive gateway into the Historic Mableton area. On the south end of Historic Mableton, traffic can also be led into the area at the north intersection of Veteran’s Memorial Highway and Old Floyd Road. This would be the closest gateway to the Front Street area and historic resources in the southwest Mableton area.
- Historic tours of Old Mableton could start at the Mable House and lead into the Old Mableton historic district on the northern end of Old Floyd Road and heading south, noting several 1930s houses and then turning west onto Front Street into the commercial district. From there, the tour could head north on Church Street, showing early residences, the Mableton First Baptist Church and the Mableton Elementary School. The tour could also include the

Johnston's River Line listed on the National Register of Historic Places located approximately two miles east on Veteran's Memorial Highway.

- Promote the businesses and improve the facades of the non-historic buildings on the northwest corner and northeast corner of Front Street and Old Floyd Road. Current businesses would be attractive to visitors to the Mableton area. Currently, sited at the northwest corner is an indoor flea market. Across the street at the northeast corner is a strip shopping center featuring a restaurant, a mini-market, a computer store and collectibles store.
- Investigate the potential for the implementation of local aesthetic guidelines for all new development in the Old Mableton area, with special attention to surrounding historic resources.

The following are ideas to promote and increase a sense of community and pride within the Old Mableton Historic area:

- Add uniquely designed house number plaques to all houses and businesses, historic and non-historic, showing a sense of community.
- Convert vacant areas into community gardens, flower gardens, or green space within infill areas. These green spaces enhance the overall aesthetics of a neighborhood.
- Encourage infill development within the neighborhood that will complement other houses on the street in style, mass, roof material and pitch, exterior material, etc.

## **4.4 Urban Safety Analysis**

### *Introduction*

One of the major concerns in any planning project for a community is the continued or improved safety of the neighborhoods involved. In this planning process, we have looked at safety recommendations for three broad land use types (e.g. Residential, commercial/mixed-use, and public spaces). These safety recommendations are based on four crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles. These CPTED principles are access control, surveillance, territorial reinforcement and maintenance.

The first of these is access control, which involves how people enter and leave an area. Secondly is surveillance, which states that all spaces should be easily observable without extra effort. The third principle is territorial reinforcement. According to this concept, all spaces, whether public, private, or semi-private, should be clearly defined as belonging to someone. The final principle is maintenance, the regular upkeep of public and private spaces. These principles or concepts are the backbone of the recommended long-term safety strategy for Historic Mableton.

### **4.4.1 Residential (Single-Family)**

#### *Access Control*

One of the things that make Historic Mableton so attractive is how properties for single-family homes are open to the street. Very few yards are fenced-off from sidewalks or streets; this is a positive feature concerning the character of community. In order to keep this feeling of openness while

providing for access control for single-family homes, we recommend that individual homeowners equip their doors and windows with locks and alarms that will help to deter potential criminals.

If some residents desire fences, we recommend these fences be restricted to backyard areas not visible from the street. Thus, back yard fences could be made of chain link to minimize cost. However, any fencing that is visible from the street (side or front yard) should be made of iron or black aluminum and no higher than 4 feet as a uniform neighborhood standard.

Since the study area carries a degree of natural safety, we believe that the appearance of safety via openness is very important. Therefore, we suggest that access control be invisible by securing elements of the house itself (i.e. doors and windows) vs. extending elements of access control, such as fences and walls, out in the semi-private space of front yards. Residents who want to limit access short of providing walls or fences may be able to accomplish the same thing by using thick shrubs and hedges of an appropriate height (under 3 ft.) so that views are not blocked and no one can hide behind them. These shrubs can be thorny or spiky (like holly) to deter people from crossing them, yet as plants, they are less obvious security devices than a fence. In essence, too many homes with fences on the street can give the wrong signal to legitimate visitors. They may believe that the neighborhood is unsafe, which is not the image that Historic Mableton wants to portray.

#### *Surveillance*

Spaces both inside and outside of individual homes should provide for casual, informal observation of the street. As a result, front porches should be included in the design of new single-family homes. In addition, some main areas inside the houses should have windows that face the street. These spaces could include a family room, living room, kitchen, bathroom and/or master bedroom.

For existing homes that may not have some of these natural surveillance elements, which may be too expensive to incorporate, such as building a front porch, there are things to do to increase casual surveillance. One such thing for all homes, new and old, is to make sure that hedges are trimmed so they do not block views to and from the street or so high that they provide hiding places.

#### *Territorial Reinforcement*

Another way of providing safety is to make sure space is clearly defined. With single-family homes with front lawns, it is important to make sure that pedestrians understand and know when they are crossing clear physical boundaries. There are a number of ways to define one's yard as semi-private space. These methods include using short (lower than 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> feet) shrubs, curbing, paving edge treatments, low walls or other formal way of defining an individual homeowner's property without surrounding the entire house with high walls or fences.

#### *Maintenance*

In any design recommendation regarding safety, maintenance must be addressed as a long-term ongoing issue. With single-family homes, it is difficult to manage how people take care of the outside of their homes. However, in this case, it can be a function of code enforcement by the municipality (city or county) requiring a minimum standard set for the maintenance of individual property. There are many examples of where one house on a block is left to deteriorate, the others begin to follow the same negative pattern. Once criminals see that there is a place in a neighborhood that people don't seem to care about, they move in and begin establishing a foothold to carry out criminal activity. Therefore, it is paramount that the local government set standards for repair and maintenance of individual properties (broken windows, painting, gutters, yard maintenance, etc.) for anything that can be seen from the street that can signal to potential criminals that there maybe an opportunity to move into the area.

#### *4.4.2 Residential (Multi-Family)*

##### *Access Control*

Based on the nature of this land use type with a population that comes and goes, it is important that the residents of a multi-family development feel secure. Often times to establish this feeling, a target-hardening approach is used such as 100% perimeter fencing, high walls and guard gates, etc. However, through creative design solutions such as using buildings as walls, there are ways to provide for access control without alienating pedestrians, who are more than likely legitimate visitors passing by. Fences, if they must be used, can be used between individual apartment building vs. wrapping around the entire property.

We would recommend that an ordinance be put into place that gives incentives to developers who take a create urban/street/pedestrian friendly approaches to providing access control around their multifamily projects.

##### *Surveillance*

Natural surveillance should be a goal for multi-family developments in the same way it is for single-family homes. A way to accomplish this is by making sure that multi-family building designs do not turn their backs on the street. In other words, living spaces inside various apartments should have good visual access to the semi-private spaces on the property as well as to the public spaces of the sidewalk and street. Patios, balconies or large window areas should provide residents the ability to look out onto the street as a way to naturally police the street by providing “eyes-on-the street.”

Of course with the potential number of residents of a multi-family development, it would be prudent to provide some level of electronic surveillance in the form of cameras and monitors. At a minimum, cameras should be provided to allow residents to identify people who come to visit. This camera should be tied to an intercom system for residents and linked into the basic cable TV system.

##### *Territorial Reinforcement*

In multi-family situations, it is very important to define space as belonging to someone or some group. Ambiguous space that no one can claim, leads to these spaces becoming no man’s lands and/or worse - hangout places for people who, at best, have nothing to do and at worse, engage in criminal behavior.

Every multi-family development is different. Therefore, it is difficult to make recommendations because one solution will not be applicable to all multi-family housing types. However, with that noted, there are some basic design principles that can be applied that should make it clearer to residents and non-residents alike that the development is a private residential community.

Some of these design techniques include organizing the apartment buildings in small clusters with courtyards that are obviously shared by small numbers (4 to 12) of residents/families. The perimeter of the property should be defined with a combination of the buildings, landscaping, low walls, curbs and maybe some very limited low fencing in strategic locations. Any lawn areas should be clear and professionally edged as a way of telling visitors that residents and management care about the property and have taken ownership.

##### *Maintenance*

The maintenance of a multi-family development can make or break the project and have a positive or negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood. In the approval of any new multifamily development, the residents and local government must look closely at the pro forma for the project to

make sure that there is significant money budgeted to adjust for vacancy rates, maintenance (landscape), repairs and replacement reserves.

It is important that landscaping is maintained, and that windows, gutters, paint and anything that can be seen from the street that is broken be repaired immediately (in 48 hours or less). This would include removal of any graffiti. Lawns should be cut often and should have a built-in irrigation system. All paved areas in parking lots should be cleaned (swept/blown) several times a week.

The local government must be vigilant when it comes to code enforcement for multi-family developments. Developers and owners, who are likely to be from out of town, must be held accountable for the condition of their property.

#### **4.4.3 Commercial/Mixed Use:**

##### *Access Control*

In a mixed-use commercial, office, and residential development, access control is more of an issue after business hours for the commercial components of the development. Where there is an office and residential component, there needs to be 24-hour access. This can present some access control challenges for the retail component that is on a 16-hour operation cycle.

The recommendation is to have a well-integrated design solution that appears seamless to the users (visitors and inhabitants) however, is intricately secure. In the case of this type of mix and depending on the density, there will have to be a combination of techniques used. One will have to be the use of security cameras. Another may be to use doormen or some other form of security guard(s). If there is a loading dock, there may be a need for a limited use of fencing with gates that can be locked from the closing to opening of the retail shops.

##### *Surveillance*

Commercial and retail areas, whether they stand-alone or are part of a mixed-use development, must optimize visibility. This visibility can be a challenge because these uses tend to have businesses that desire to place signage and sales information in the windows of the stores, obscuring views into the stores and out onto the street. This can present some real safety challenges. As a policy, banners, signage and other general obstructions not be allowed on windows. Another policy should stipulate that 80% or more of a storefront's window area must be unobstructed.

By their nature, mixed use developments carry a higher level of surveillance opportunities because of the multiple uses meaning people are coming and going all day. As for natural surveillance needs, mixed-use developments provide the greatest opportunity with minimal formal effort. Where possible, the local building department via zoning, should encourage the development of mixed use developments to enhance local safety and natural surveillance opportunities.

##### *Territorial Reinforcement*

Based on the visual preference survey (see section 3.2), it was clear that residents and other stakeholders preferred commercial/retail developments that provide intimate spaces where people could sit and eat, talk, people watch, etc. Spaces that are clearly defined as belonging to the shops adjacent to them will provide one of the best opportunities to have shop owners take personal responsibility for the space.

From a design perspective, commercial, retail, and mixed use developments should also have spaces clearly defined as belonging to someone or some group. The buildings should face and be as close to

the street as possible while leaving a generous, wide sidewalk to allow people to window shop while others walk along without impediment.

#### *Maintenance*

As with any commercial development with large volumes of traffic, keeping the area clean and in good condition will be a challenge. However, retaining a good management company with a proven track record for maintenance should be a credential required by the local government when approving the development of a mixed use complex.

Depending on the size and complexity of the development, there may need to be several full-time maintenance and cleaning staff. While it will be in the best interest of the private developer to keep a well maintained development or risk losing present and potential residents, it is still in the best interest of the local residents and government to look closely at the pro forma for the project to make sure that there is significant money budgeted to adjust for vacancy rates, maintenance (landscape), repairs and replacement reserves.

#### **4.4.4 Public Space:**

##### *Access Control*

By the nature of the land use type, access control to public space is not really possible nor is it necessarily desirable. Parks and other civic outdoor space are for the public and therefore are open to all. However, with that said, there are places that post hours stating when the public space is symbolically closed. For example, many public city parks post signs saying that the park is closed between 11PM and 6AM. This means that the local government does not want people in the park during those hours; however, it is difficult to enforce because there are no doors to close and lock. The signage provides a level of social control requiring people to honor the law.

##### *Surveillance*

All public spaces should be observable from the immediate surroundings. In other words, there should be homes with front porches that look out over neighborhood parks; multi-family and commercial/retail spaces should look out over plazas and amphitheaters. The streets and sidewalks should also be under the casual, yet watchful eye of surrounding residents and other stakeholders.

##### *Territorial Reinforcement*

The use of planting strips along sidewalks, specialty pavement and historical markers are just a few examples of how even public space can be well defined as belonging to someone or a group. In this case, the group would be the residents and stakeholders of Historic Mableton. This issue of territorial reinforcement can be taken to a finer grain level and have sub-areas identified each with its own unique street treatments. This gives the stakeholders in that area a sense of uniqueness and can provide an opportunity for bonding among immediate neighbors.

##### *Maintenance*

Like any other building type, public spaces have to be well kept. However, the ultimate responsibility for maintenance of parks and other public spaces is the local municipality. This maintenance includes the prompt removal of graffiti and trash from the streets. Having clean, well-maintained streets and sidewalks says a lot about the leadership of a city. The local municipality also has the responsibility of replacing and repairing any sidewalk and street treatment and to make sure there are adequate funds available to re-order and install any street/sidewalk treatment.

## 4.5 Community Design Recommendations

Improving the quality of urban design, or the design of streets, structures and the spaces in-between, is critical to the future success of Historic Mableton as a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use community. Design standards for the Historic Mableton area must serve both as regulation, in terms of disallowing inappropriate construction, and as incentive as far as reasonable standards can encourage development activity and provide security for investments. The following general recommendations for standards for the Historic Mableton community should be considered for implementation through revisions to existing Cobb County standards and ordinances.

### *Parking*

Of the factors impacting the quality of the pedestrian environment, parking is among the most important. Therefore, it should be tightly controlled in order to promote more pedestrian-friendly development and redevelopment in Mableton. The maximum allowable number of spaces should be based on the square footage of retail/commercial space and the number of bedrooms per multi-family residential unit. Multi-family residential units shall be allowed one and one half (1.5) automobile spaces per bedroom for one bedroom units and two (2) automobile space per bedroom for two bedroom and greater units. To provide for visitors, the total number of additional spaces may be allotted at a rate that equals, but does not exceed, five (5) percent of the total number of spaces for the building. Retail properties serving the general public shall be allocated one off-street space per 250 square feet of floor space. Commercial, manufacturing, and industrial properties not serving public retail trade shall be allocated one space per 2,000 square feet of gross office, plant, or storage area. Professional and office properties shall be allocated one space per 1,000 square feet of gross floor space.

Additional automobile parking shall be relegated to area streets which have been designated as public parking areas.

### *Building Density*

Dense buildings shorten the distance an individual must travel between destinations and create visually welcoming pathways (street enclosure). To encourage greater building density in the study area, overall density limitations for residential and non-residential buildings should be lessened.

### *Building Setback from the Street*

Closely related to density, building setback determines the volume of the space in which the pedestrian travels. Human scaled spaces (small volumes) create a sense of security and provide visual scale. All buildings, therefore, whether retail, commercial, industrial, or residential, shall be set no further than 20 feet from the outside edge of the sidewalk. No parking spaces shall be allowed between the sidewalk and the building façade.

### *Building Height*

Currently, the height of buildings in Mableton does not exceed three stories, or approximately 35 feet. While there is an intent to somewhat increase the density of the Historic Mableton Community, it would be out of character to allow buildings to rise above a three story height. Therefore, building height restrictions should remain at their current 35 feet level for most categories, with possible exception given to special circumstances such as a church steeple.

### *Lot Area*

To encourage innovative infill development in residential, commercial and mixed-use areas, the standards for minimum lot area and minimum lot width at the public street frontage should be



lessened. In all areas, minimum lot width should be reduced to 50 feet of frontage on a public street, consistent with the original dimensions of the town plan for Mableton. In residential areas, the minimum lot size restrictions should be decreased to 5,000 square feet in order to allow for infill development at a village scale. Similarly, in commercial areas the minimum lot size should be reduced to 10,000 square feet to allow for development of more pedestrian scaled commercial structures. Residential and commercial construction should also be allowed to use the zero lot line model, where one side of a structure may be built to the actual property line, allowing for the maximum usage of the remaining side lot.

#### *Lot Coverage - Buildings*

Maximum lot coverage requirements for development may be increased in conjunction with an overall village density for Mableton. For residential properties, maximum lot coverage should be at least 50%, and for commercial properties there should be no limit on lot coverage, as is currently the standard.

#### *Lot Coverage - Other Impervious Surfaces*

To address problems of rain and storm water runoff associated with surface parking lots, impervious surfaces in the Historic Mableton area used for automobile parking may comprise up to but not exceed 30 percent of a lot's total square footage.

#### *Buffer Yards*

To encourage building density and increased street-level bulk, side and rear yard buffers are not required for any new commercial structures in the Historic Mableton area. The decision to install buffer yards in commercial development will be left to the property owner. For residential properties, 5 foot side yards and 20 foot rear yards should be maintained.

#### *Fences*

Fences in the Historic Mableton community should serve to enhance the character of the community rather than present an imposing element to pedestrians. In residential areas, street-fronting fencing should be low (4 feet maximum) and constructed of materials associated with traditional neighborhoods such as wooden pickets or brick piers and wrought iron. Street-fronting fencing should not be allowed on commercial properties as this does not support the pedestrian oriented sidewalk environment.

#### *Trees*

Because trees provide erosion control, shade for pedestrians, clean air, and help mitigate the heat island effect, they should be planted along all building facades facing the street, regardless of land use, at the minimum rate of one per 25 feet of total lot width. This requirement can be fulfilled by clustering trees such that the total number of trees equals the number otherwise required.

#### *Windows*

To limit the incidence of blank, monolithic walls along pedestrian corridors, all new Historic Mableton area buildings shall be required to present a minimum of one window per story per 15 feet of total street façade width. Window arrangements should follow orderly, symmetrical patterns consistent with traditional southern small-town architecture.

#### *Design Review Committee*

An association of property owners in the Historic Mableton area should be periodically convened to review development proposals for the quality and coherency of exterior design and to study the overall progress of development in the area. The purpose of the committee will be to insure that proposed developments meet the spirit and intent of the special design and development standards.

Following this charge, property owners and/or developers will be required to submit proposed site plans to the committee prior to the issuance of a building permit. The committee will have authority to suggest non-structural design (facade) changes to any site proposal prior to final approval.

The committee should consist of no more than five members appointed by the Cobb County Commissioner representing the Historic Mableton area. Each member's term shall be three years, at which point members must be reappointed and approved. Individuals are eligible to serve three consecutive terms. There shall be no financial compensation for service. All meetings shall be open to the public and shall provide time for public comment. Meetings should be scheduled on an as needed basis, and may be suspended if there is no business.

## **4.6 Housing**

Housing, as a building type, is the cornerstone of a city. Second only to food, shelter from the elements is basic need that must be met. In addition, housing as a land use category has a direct impact on retail, schools and transportation. The location and quality of retail is directly related to the housing.

### *Schools and Housing*

Schools also depend on the housing stock of a community, and in particular, they depend on the amount of multifamily housing units to maintain a significant student body over decades. While children from single family, for sale homes form the foundation for good public schools, it is the circulating population of children at multifamily apartments that sustains schools over time, long after all of the children from single family homes have grown up and left the school system.

### *Aging in Place*

In order for a community to be sustainable long-term, it has to have a diversity of housing types, styles and prices. Single family and multifamily homes of various sizes and prices provide communities the opportunity to survive for many generations because they allow residents to “age-in-place.” Aging in place is a concept that says that people can, if they choose to, live a neighborhood from cradle to grave by finding housing to fit changing life styles and needs as one ages and all within a reasonable walking distance.

#### **John and Linda**

How this concept works: John as a young 22 year olds who just finished college, is not married, has a new job paying him \$32,000. He is not ready to buy a home so he needs to rent an apartment. By age 25, John meets Linda. Time goes by, they get married and have children on the way. They have each given up their one bedroom apartment for a two-bedroom apartment. These one-bedroom apartments will be ready for the next set of young college graduates to take John and Linda's place.

John and Linda want to start building a equity base by purchasing a single-family home so they walk around the neighborhood to see what is available for sale. Their combined incomes allow them to afford a nice home, but they still have student loans, two cars and other expenses that need to be reduced and they need to save money for a down payment. They find a small, starter home not very far from the apartment that they live in (within a few blocks – they walked there) and purchase the home. They just left behind their two-bedroom apartment for the next set of young just married couple to take their place.

About 20 years go by, and in that time, John and Linda have purchased a larger home in walking distance of that starter home that they purchased. By now, their youngest child has started college, and John and Linda, who are now close to 50 years old, don't need the 3 bedroom house with the den, large family room, and yard for the kids and the dog that died a few years ago. They want to downsize and pull the equity out of the home for college money and a down payment on a smaller maintenance-free residence, maybe a two-bedroom condo or townhouse. Meanwhile, they are leaving behind the big house with the yard made for another family with pre-teen and teenage children and the starter-home before that for parents with young children to occupy and help re-populate the neighborhood schools.

John and Linda have become "empty-nesters" and are now in their mid-50s. Their children, who have finished with college, decide that they really like the community they grew up in. This community houses the local retail where they had their first summer jobs as teenagers and the schools they went to. The children return and move into the apartments where their parents lived some 30 years earlier.

Another 10 years go by, and John and Linda's children have their own children who walk and ride their bikes to visit John and Linda (grandma and granddad) in their townhouse. Ten more years go by, and John has passed away. Linda, now near 80 years old, still likes her independence and anticipates seeing her great-grandchildren so she wants to stay in the community. She moves into a retirement community for some continuing care. She has left behind a townhouse for the next empty-nester, maybe her own children, to occupy. Perhaps, in the not too distant future, she will leave her retirement community apartment behind for the next widow.

This story that describes the life of a couple over 60 years provides a very simplistic example of how traditional towns were designed to accommodate the full lifecycle of people and their families. However, with the advent of higher mobility via private automobiles after WWII, the design of communities changed into "bedroom communities" and communities with one type of housing style. In most instances, this housing style was setup to cater to married couples with small children. Additionally, "social infrastructure" needs (grocery stores, pharmacies, parks, retail, schools, etc.) were separated from these houses requiring people to drive everywhere, not giving them the ability to explore and interact with everyday people on the street.

In good, traditional neighborhood design, housing stock is diverse enough to allow for intergenerational residents. Mableton is in a unique position because it has a traditional neighborhood design that can support the concept of aging-in-place. This preservation plan with the recommended upgrade to existing homes and the addition of new housing types will provide the mix necessary to keep the community viable for many generations.

#### *Mobility/Transportation:*

Housing locations are often ignored when it comes to transportation policy. In reality, however, the location of housing has a direct relationship on how people utilize their automobiles. Unfortunately, the Metro-Atlanta region's housing patterns over the past 30 years have separated housing from retail, recreations and employment centers. The result has put the region in jeopardy of falling economically behind other regions around the nation reducing its ability to attract quality businesses and workers.

Historic Mableton, with its traditional grid of streets, small blocks and close proximity to shopping and recreation, has the potential to again become a community where people can walk to goods and

services. The results of such pedestrian-oriented housing locally will be an increased sense of community pride and unity, while reducing the reliance on automobiles will contribute to solving the region's degraded air and water quality status.

*Resident Desires and Character Recommendations:*

Housing sets the tone for a community by saying to visitors that our neighborhoods are inviting or closed. Based on input from the public involvement process, it is evident that residents of Historic Mableton want their community to be open and friendly. The residents want as much of that openness reflected in the design character of the housing as possible.

*Single Family:*

Based on the results of the visual preference survey (see section 3.2), it is clear that the residents of Old Mableton would like any new homes in the neighborhood to match the scale and character of the existing housing stock. More urban in style but modest sized homes were preferred by residents. This means houses with front porches that could fit on small narrow lots were preferred to homes with broad fronts with garages facing the street.

*Multifamily:*

The survey also showed that residents want to see multifamily units with a traditional design character that closely resembled single-family residential archetypes (gable roof lines, bay windows, double-hung windows and no more than three stories in height). Loft housing was also acceptable if older commercial buildings in the neighborhood needed to be converted. However, for the most part, the exterior character of these older buildings should remain unchanged during the conversion to a new loft housing and/or mixed-use buildings.

Townhomes were also acceptable as a housing type provided the character of the architecture followed the traditional Old Mableton housing design.

#### **4.7 Community Building and Organizations**

A significant challenge facing Historic Mableton is the need to increase the level of community involvement in development, redevelopment and community building activities at the local level. Based on the level of community involvement in this planning process, it is evident that residents and business owners are interested in the future of Mableton. The momentum that has been generated in this process should be extended into long-term community involvement that can bring about long-term improvements.

The first and most readily available venue for community involvement is through the local government for Mableton, Cobb County. The County's Community and Economic Development Departments, among others, are tasked with facilitating community improvements in Mableton and all unincorporated parts of Cobb County. Mableton residents and organizations should be made aware of the ongoing opportunities that exist to be involved in and supportive of Cobb County's activities.

In addition to working through existing Cobb County agencies, it is the position of the authors of this report that the residents of Historic Mableton would benefit greatly by forming a neighborhood-based Community Development Corporation (CDC). A CDC could act as the necessary catalyst in this redevelopment strategy to enable local residents to work together to make permanent improvements in the quality of life in the community. CDC's have sprouted up all over the county to find solutions to their communities' most severe problems. These nonprofit development organizations are

typically managed by small professional staffs yet, with limited resources, have managed to make significant impacts in neighborhood revitalization activities. CDC's have proven to be successful in leveraging resources otherwise not available for community development projects. Furthermore, in order to enhance capacity, they forge creative partnerships between the public and private (for-profit and not-for-profit) sectors. There are several CDC models that the Mableton Community should consider emulating including a faith-based or church-based CDC or partnering with an established organization such as Cobb Housing Inc. (CHI), a Countywide Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO).

## 5. MASTER PLAN

This section includes graphic and written description of the master plan for Historic Mableton that has resulted from the previously described planning process and recommendations.

### 5.1 General Description

Master plan recommendations for Historic Mableton are based on ideas that have emerged from planning analysis and the public participation process. For general descriptive purposes, the Historic Mableton Area has been subdivided into the following districts: Historic Core Area, Mableton Elementary Area, Old Floyd Road Corridor, Walker Drive Redevelopment Area, Carol Circle Redevelopment Area, and Veterans Memorial/Floyd Road Commercial Corridors.

#### *Historic Core Area*

A key organizing feature in the concept plan is the original (1882) platting of a nine block area for public auction. The visage of these nine blocks is still evident in the community, forming the historic core of Mableton. Recommendations to extend Daniel Street to meet Front Street at the southwest corner of this core area and to develop a pedestrian-oriented path along the Avery Street right of way complete the restoration of the nine block area.

At the southern end of the Historic Core Area, Front Street and the two blocks north of Front Street become a community focal point with park space, transit connections and commercial activity. South of Front Street, a civic plaza and park area complements the future commuter rail station by providing gathering space and opportunities for traditional vendor retail services.

The First Baptist Church of Mableton occupies the northeast block of the core area. To the south, the block between Center and Mable Streets includes a mixture of residential and commercial uses. West of Church Street, the recommended land use is single family-residential. Infill development on vacant or subdivided parcels and rehabilitation of older homes should be encouraged in this area.

#### *Mableton Elementary Area*

Residential land should surround Mableton Elementary School. To facilitate infill development in the school area, Peak Street should be extended to Prospect Street, formalizing the school and Prater Park as a block. The intersection of Church Street and School Way becomes a focal point due to the extension of Wilson Drive to Church Street and the development of a community center or park at the northeast corner. The proximity of Mableton Elementary, the First Baptist Church, the cemetery and new a park or community facility establishes an institutional use zone.

#### *Old Floyd Road Corridor*

From Mable Street to Clay Road, the Old Floyd Road corridor should be redeveloped as a mixed-use commercial/office/residential corridor. New and renovated buildings should conform to a traditional architectural style and be situated near the street with Parking should be relegated to areas behind buildings. This corridor is anchored on the southern end by the commercial block between Mable Street and Front Street and on the northern end by a gateway park and community center/library facility.

#### *Walker Drive Redevelopment Area*

With the extension of Walker Drive to Church Street, a significant amount of land may be opened up for development/redevelopment. The land use in this area should be mixed use with an emphasis on

higher density residential. Public open space should be included as a central focal point of the residential development. The Mitchell Street pedestrian corridor connects this area to the Front Street commercial and transit area, and Walker Drive connects to the Church Street institutional area.

#### *Carol Circle Redevelopment Area*

The intersection of Carol Circle and Old Floyd Road should be improved to align with Walker Drive and the extension of Center Street to Carol Circle. The land use focus of Carol Circle should be higher density residential, perhaps including multi-story townhouse units. This residential area has easy access to the Old Floyd Road mixed use corridor, Floyd Road and Veterans Memorial Highway.

#### *Veterans Memorial and Floyd Road Commercial Corridors*

Parcels fronting the portions of Veterans Memorial Highway and Floyd Road that are in the Historic Mableton Study Area should remain highway commercial. Significant improvements should be made to this area such as coordination of signage, landscape and sidewalk enhancements, building façade updates, and redevelopment of obsolete or blighted properties.

## **5.2 Land Use**

Future land use recommendations for the Historic Mableton study area include specific land use categories that will meet the area's specific needs for preservation and redevelopment. Following are descriptions of the land use categories indicated in the Future Land Use Recommendations map.

#### *Village Density Residential (Yellow – 0 to 8 dwelling units per acre net)*

The Village Density Residential category is based on the precedent of block design and dimensions of the 1882 plat for Mableton. Village Residential blocks in Historic Mableton should maintain the character of the community, which primarily includes single family detached homes on small lots. Infill development of single family detached homes consistent with this character should be encouraged by the allowance of net densities up to 8 units per acre.

#### *Town Density Residential (Orange – 0 to 16 dwelling units per acre net)*

The Town Density Residential category allows for redevelopment of property in specified areas to include residential densities up to 16 units per acre. Such residential development, whether single family or multi family in structure, should be required to meet design guidelines consistent with the Historic Mableton community character and should include permanently preserved open space.

#### *Mixed Use Commercial/Office/Residential (Magenta – density regulated by design guidelines)*

While Historic Mableton is in total a mixed-use community, the Mixed-Use Commercial/Office/Residential category allows specifically for a mixture of uses on a single lot. Integrated developments with residential, office and/or commercial components may be arranged either horizontally (with differing uses adjacent to one another) or vertically (with uses differing from one floor to the next of a multi-story building). Mixed use developments should meet Historic Mableton design guidelines and should not include any use considered to be a nuisance.

#### *Traditional Retail Commercial (Red)*

Traditional Retail Commercial land use in Historic Mableton includes both the “corridor-type” retail commercial uses as found on Veterans Memorial Highway and Floyd Road and the “main street-type” retail commercial uses as historically existed on Front Street. Traditional Retail Commercial areas may include vertical mixed uses, such as offices or loft residences above shops, but must include sidewalk-oriented retail storefronts as the primary use.

*Civic and Institutional (Purple)*

Civic and Institutional land uses include public facilities such as schools, transit centers and libraries as well as private/non-profit uses such as churches and civic/social clubs. Design and construction of new public and institutional facilities in Historic Mableton should be consistent with community design guidelines.

*Parks and Open Space (Green)*

Dedicated parkland and open space is a critical component of the Historic Mableton master plan. These areas include facilities for recreation, passive park spaces, and greenway and buffer areas.

### **5.3 Transportation and Public Facilities**

Improvements to public infrastructure and community facilities are needed throughout the Historic Mableton area. In some circumstances, these can be privately funded in conjunction with new development or redevelopment, but many will need to be completed with public funds. Major recommended public improvement projects from the master plan are described below. These public investment needs are divided into three general categories: Road Network Improvements, Bike/Pedestrian/Streetscape Improvements, and Public Land/Parks/Buildings.

*Road Network Improvements*

Extending from the Front Street area, the two primary north-south corridors of Church Street and Old Floyd Road will lead into an improved community street network that should be pedestrian-friendly and aesthetically reminiscent of traditional small southern towns. This network must support redevelopment at densities greater than currently exist, a scenario necessary for a transit-oriented, traditional neighborhood. Recommended projects to enhance the road network include the following:

- Peak Street Railroad Overpass - Closing the at-grade railroad crossing at Church Street is recommended for traffic safety reasons based on current conditions. This will become even more important as commuter rail service is introduced in the future. In order to maintain adequate connections from Historic Mableton to Veterans Memorial Highway, a replacement for the Church Street crossing should be sought. The feasibility of extending Peak Street to Veterans Memorial Highway with a new railroad overpass should be further investigated.
- Walker Drive – School Way - Walker Drive currently is a dead end street that extends westward from Old Floyd Road. By continuing Walker Drive to Church Street at the intersection with School Way, the Historic Mableton street network will be significantly improved, particularly in the area of the Mableton Elementary School.
- Center Street – Carol Circle Connection – Extending Center Street westward to reach Carol Circle will offer another east to west connection in the Historic Mableton street network. This connection will also define blocks for more organized development along Old Floyd Road and Carol Circle.
- Peak Street – Prospect Street Connection – According to Cobb County tax maps, right-of-way currently exists that would allow the extension of Peak Street to Prospect Street along the western edge of the Mableton Elementary School property. This street network improvement will create a formal western edge to the school property and will also allow for greater traffic flexibility around the school.



- Daniel Street Extension – Daniel Street is the western boundary of the Historic Mableton area, consistent with the 1882 plat for Mableton. The extension of Daniel Street two blocks southward to connect with Front Street will complete the historic street framework for Historic Mableton.
- Walker Drive – Carol Circle Realignment – Walker Drive and Carol Circle currently intersect with Old Floyd Road in close proximity but not at a geometrically appropriate intersection. The realignment of these intersections to a single four way intersection will improve traffic safety and pedestrian safety along Old Floyd Road.
- Old Floyd Road Bridge Improvements – The Old Floyd Road railroad overpass should be improved and widened to accommodate a turn land for traffic entering Veterans Memorial Highway as well as improved sidewalks.
- Walker Circle Paving – Walker Circle, a cul-de-sac off of Walker Drive, is a dirt and gravel surface road recommended for paving.
- Front Street Paving – Paved Road on Front Street currently ends at Peak Street. Front Street should be cleared and paved as far as the intersection with an extended Daniel Street.

#### *Bike/Pedestrian/Streetscape Improvements*

Along with improvements to the road network for vehicular circulation, enhancements to the public right-of-way for pedestrian and bicycle circulation are needed. Any new road connection project in Historic Mableton should involve streetscaping, including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, street trees, pedestrian lighting, benches, trash receptacles, etc. Existing corridors that should receive streetscape upgrades include the following:

- Church Street Corridor Streetscape – Church Street is in need of new and/or repaired sidewalks along its full length, from Front Street to Clay Road. Improvements along the Church Street corridor should include handicap accessible ramps at crosswalks, pedestrian lighting and shade trees.
- Front Street Streetscape – Though only two blocks in length, the portion of Front Street from Old Floyd Road to Peak Street will become a focal area in Historic Mableton. Main street-type improvements to the pedestrian environment should reflect the intended storefront retail character. Elements of this include wide sidewalks, pedestrian lighting with banners, shade trees, and street furnishings such as benches and trash receptacles.
- Old Floyd Road Corridor Streetscape – The most dramatic streetscape improvements in Historic Mableton are recommended for the Old Floyd Road corridor, extending from Veterans Memorial Highway north to Clay Road.
- Floyd Road Streetscape – Though a very wide arterial corridor, the Floyd Road streetscape could be significantly improved by the addition of sidewalks, street trees and other landscaping.
- Mitchell Street Bike/Pedestrian Corridor – Mitchell Street, originally the eastern street in the Mableton grid, currently exists for only one block from Mable Street to Center Street. This street is very narrow and serves only a small amount of vehicular traffic. The extension of Mitchell Street to Avery Street and conversion of the roadway into a pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented path is recommended.

- Avery Street Bike/Pedestrian Corridor – Similar to Mitchell Street, Avery Street is recommended to be extended to follow its historic path and the roadway should also become a pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented path.
- General Sidewalk and Drainage Improvements – For the most part, sidewalks are not present along the older residential blocks of Historic Mableton. A program to add sidewalks and reconstruct the open-ditch stormwater drainage system as a piped system should be initiated.

#### *Public Lands/Parks/Buildings*

Public funding will be required for recommended new public facilities as well as for improvements to existing public facilities. These projects will involve land acquisition, landscape development, new buildings, and ongoing maintenance and upgrades. For Historic Mableton to function as a mixed-use, transit-oriented community of moderate density, parks and public facilities will be vital. The following is a list of major projects recommended in the master plan:

- Commuter Rail Plaza and Transit Station – Though commuter rail service to Mableton is not anticipated to be in place until after the year 2012, it is not too early for the community to think about this facility. Short term activities should include land acquisition and advance planning for a transit station and adjacent park and/or plaza.
- Railroad Greenway Trail/Linear Park – The existing undeveloped buffer of land between Fontaine Road and the railroad is a desired location for an off-road pedestrian and bicycle trail that could begin in Mableton near Front Street and ultimately reach the Silver Comet Trail and Heritage Park in Cobb County. Land acquisition and/or easement agreements with Norfolk Southern Railroad will be required as a first step towards developing a greenway trail alongside the railroad.
- Clay Road and Old Floyd Road Community Property – One of the prominent gateways into Historic Mableton is the intersection of Old Floyd Road and Clay Road, near Floyd Road. It is anticipated that this gateway will serve an increased level of traffic once the Mable House amphitheater is completed. Property to the west of Old Floyd Road has been identified as a desired location for a public facility such as a park, community center or library that will enhance the community gateway. Short term action should include land acquisition and planning or feasibility studies concerning different community facility development options.
- Mableton Elementary School/Prater Park Upgrades and Improvements – While important new developments and improvements are recommended for Historic Mableton, it is critical that existing public facilities not be overlooked. The school and park should both be considered for upgrade renovations in addition to regular maintenance activities.

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION

### 6.1 Land Use Planning and Regulation – Five Year Implementation Plan

Two key implementation activities are recommended for the short term to establish the necessary groundwork for Historic Mableton redevelopment.

- Revise the Cobb County Comprehensive Plans to be consistent with the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan.
- Revise Cobb County's Zoning Ordinance and Map to reflect the recommendations of the plan.

Revision of the Comprehensive Plan is scheduled to be concurrent with the review and approval process for the Historic Mableton Preservation and Improvement Plan. Adjustments to zoning regulations should then be made to establish consistency between these regulations and the plan. Both of these implementation activities should be accomplished by the Cobb County Community Development and Economic Development Departments working in conjunction with the Mableton community.

### 6.2 Capital Improvements – Five Year Implementation Plan

The following table includes schematic level cost estimates for the previously identified Historic Mableton capital improvements projects as well as suggested prioritization for implementation. Schematic cost estimates are in current dollars and include a 25% contingency factor. Estimates are for engineering and construction cost only, and do not include consideration for right-of-way acquisition.

Schematic Level Transportation Capital Improvements Cost Estimates

Project	Schematic Cost Estimate
Road Network Improvements	
First Phase	
Walker Drive – School Way Connection	\$350,000
Center Street – Carol Circle Connection	\$350,000
Peak Street – Prospect Street Connection	\$600,000
Walker Drive – Carol Circle Realignment	\$200,000
Old Floyd Road Bridge Improvements	\$500,000
Walker Circle Paving	\$250,000
Front Street Paving	\$400,000
Total First Phase Road Improvements	\$2,650,000
Second Phase	
Peak Street Railroad Overpass	\$2,000,000
Daniel Street Extension	\$800,000
Total Second Phase Road Improvements	\$2,800,000
Total Road Improvements	\$5,450,000
Streetscape Improvements Only	

First Phase	
Church Street Corridor Streetscape	\$840,000
Front Street Streetscape	\$315,000
Old Floyd Road Corridor Streetscape	\$1,080,000
General Sidewalk and Drainage Improvements	\$1,500,000
Total First Phase Streetscape Improvements	\$3,735,000
Second Phase	
Floyd Road Streetscape	\$960,000
Mitchell Street Bike/Pedestrian Corridor	\$375,000
Avery Street Bike/Pedestrian Corridor	\$900,000
Total Second Phase Streetscape Improvements	\$2,235,000
Total Streetscape Improvements	\$5,970,000
Total Capital Improvements	\$11,420,000

Additional public expenditures are recommended for public land acquisition and development of parks and community facilities, as described in section 5.3 of this report. The specific nature of land acquisition and facility construction will require additional analysis to determine accurate costs.

### **6.3 Organizational Recommendations – Five Year Implementation Plan**

Recommendations for land use, development/redevelopment and public improvements represent a significant scope of work for implementation. It is vital that the right kinds of organizations be in place to facilitate a long-term implementation process. Throughout the planning process, the Mableton Community has shown overwhelming interest and support for community preservation and improvement. Above all, this community involvement and leadership must be extended through the implementation process.

The following sections include details about specific organizational recommendations at the community and county level that are key elements needed to achieve the goals set forth in this plan.

#### **6.3.1 Cobb County Government Staff**

The long term challenge of revitalizing Historic Mableton will inevitably require considerable involvement from the local government level. It will be necessary for the Cobb County government staff to boost the level of attention being paid to Mableton, as has been the case throughout the planning process. Mableton, however, is only one of the many communities in Cobb County that will demand special attention. For this reason, it is recommended that a new County staff position be developed: a Historic Mableton liaison in the Cobb County Government.

Associated with the Cobb County Economic Development Department and Community Development Department, the new staff position should be commissioned with the task of ensuring that Mableton interests and concerns are continually communicated to the County staff and Commissioners. The liaison should also fill the role of assisting the Mableton community and organizations in their community building work.

Cobb County government involvement will be particularly important in the process of leveraging public funding for community improvements in Historic Mableton. A County staff liaison should take the lead in the implementation of recommended capital improvements by using available local

funds to leverage state and federal grants. The Transportation Enhancements (TE) program of the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) of the Atlanta Regional Commission are two examples of funding programs that could assist with capital improvements in Historic Mableton.

### **6.3.2 County Redevelopment Agency**

Numerous special redevelopment powers are made available to local governments in Georgia through the Georgia Redevelopment Powers Act. These powers, such as the ability to establish special Tax Increment Finance districts and issue revenue bonds for public improvements, are the most significant tools for redevelopment that exist in Georgia today. In order to access these redevelopment powers, however, certain conditions must be met. The most significant of these conditions is the requirement that an official “redevelopment agency” be established to serve a jurisdiction for which there exists a redevelopment plan.

At this time, there does not exist a redevelopment agency in Cobb County that could use redevelopment powers (such as the establishment of a tax increment finance district) on Mableton’s behalf. Under current state law, a local referendum is necessary to approve the establishment of a redevelopment agency for a jurisdiction. Such referendums have recently passed in some Georgia communities (such as the City of East Point), and some public authorities (such as the Clayton County Development Authority) have been granted redevelopment agency status by voters in the past.

In order to realize the greatest incentives for redevelopment in the near future, local and State level lobbying should be undertaken to make it possible for redevelopment powers to be used in Mableton. Simultaneous with these efforts, it should be determined whether the South Cobb Development Authority or another similar Cobb entity should function as an official redevelopment agency. While an agency with redevelopment powers would play an important role in Historic Mableton, such an agency could also benefit other areas of Cobb County in need of redevelopment assistance.

### **6.3.3 Historic Mableton Community Development Corporation (CDC).**

The energy of community involvement that has been displayed during the planning process can be channeled into a community-led organization with staff and financial resources that are necessary to realize redevelopment projects. An Historic Mableton CDC should be established to include a local board of directors with representation from the community and its institutions. It is possible that the First Baptist Church of Mableton could take the lead role in the formation of the CDC as a faith-based initiative, or alternately the CDC could form as a community-based organization with facilitation and assistance from the church and other local organizations. Once established, the CDC will work with the Mableton liaison to attract private development funding to Historic Mableton.

A detailed description of the issues and steps involved in the establishment of a CDC is included in appendix E.

## **6.4 Funding and Finance**

Locating and accessing sources of funding and financing for community improvements in Historic Mableton will be a long-term endeavor. Cooperation among the Mableton community residents, businesses, organizations and local government will be required to successfully fund public improvements as well as to recruit private investment.

Local funding must be made available through measures such as budgeting for capital improvements, issuance of bonds, sales tax proceeds, etc. However, due to the high costs of public improvements, available and potential local funds should be viewed primarily as opportunities to leverage larger sums of State and Federal funding. Such funding is available primarily from Department of Transportation sources through the TIP process and programs such as Transportation Enhancements (TE) and the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI).

The private and non-profit sector development activities that will be required to realize the potential of Historic Mableton can be encouraged by local assistance and abatement programs. A Community Development Corporation can access grant funds and low interest loans for housing development projects. Enterprise Zone incentives should also be used to lower the development cost in Mableton, thus increasing developers' ability to make projects work. Ultimately, though, the greatest attraction to private development expenditure is a community that has a plan for the future and cooperates with developers and property owners who wish to be a part of the plan's implementation.